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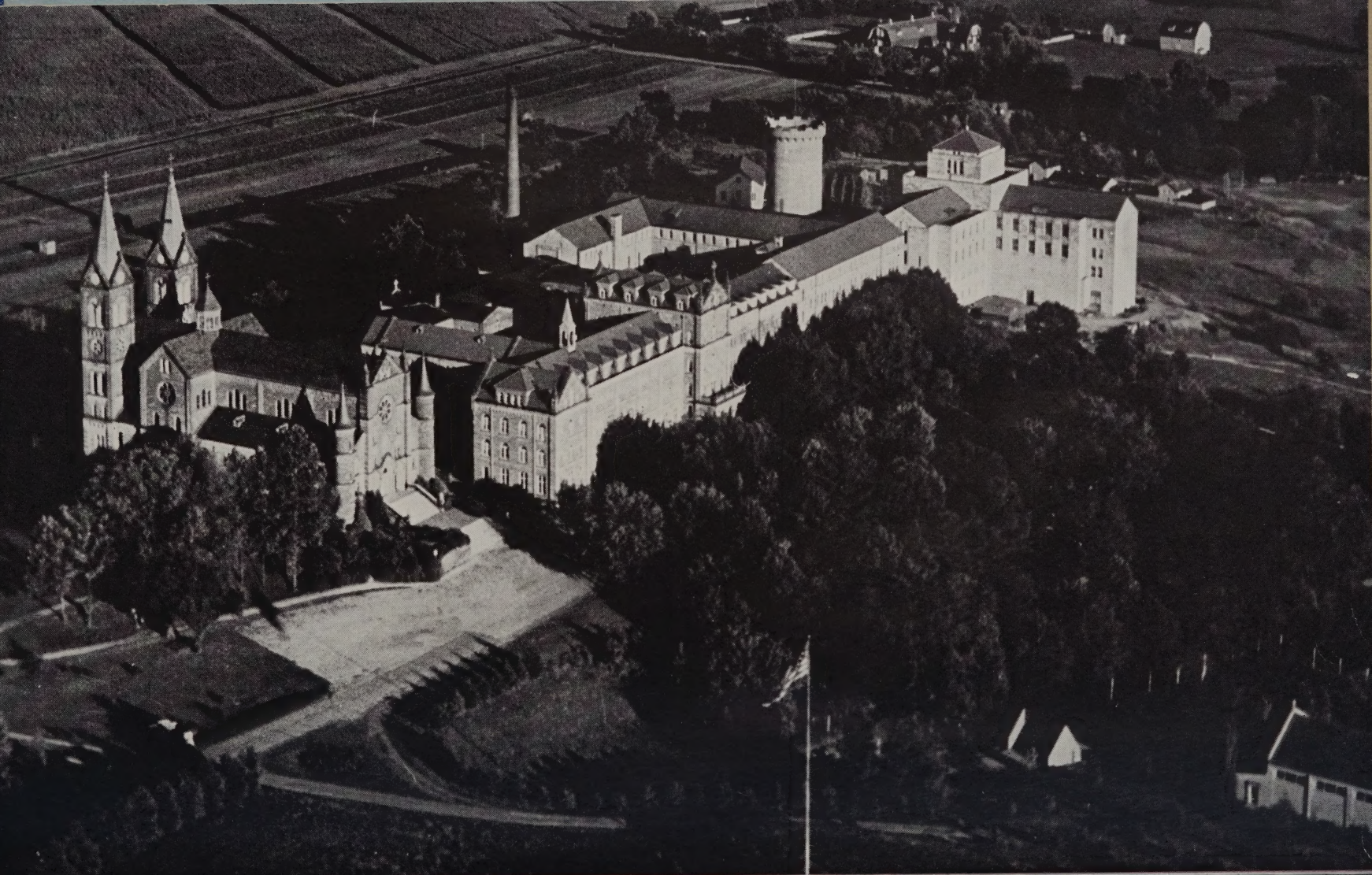


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ARCHABEEY, 1854-1954

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HISTORY OF ST. MEINRAD ARCHABBEY



History
of
ST. MEINRAD ARCHABBEY
1854-1954

by
Albert Kleber, O.S.B., S.T.D.



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ARCHBISHOP OF INDIANAPOLIS

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FOREWORD

THE TASK of the historian is reverently to unveil the hand of God directing events that in all things His glory be made known to us. This task demands that the historian be a conscientious witness to the truth of what he records. St. Augustine pays high tribute to Sallust by terming him "*nobilitate veritatis historicus*—historian with the nobility of truth" (*De Civ. Dei*, I, 5). The historian may not let consideration either of friendship or of enmity, either of family or institutional or national pride swerve him from an unbiased presentation of facts as he has found them in the critically evaluated sources; he may not let even fear of scandal serve him as a pretense for withholding or misrepresenting facts which have an important bearing upon events that must be told in the interest of truth. To this effect St. Bernard aptly quotes St. Gregory (*Hom. 7 in Ezech.*): "It is better that scandal arise than that truth be relinquished." That was the immutable rule according to which the inspired historians wrote the Holy Scriptures: neither pauper nor King nor High Priest was exempt from the searchlight of truth. That has been the endeavor also of every historian worth the name. The saintly Baronius, the father of modern church history, could write in Rome itself: "We are not of their sort who, when truth is to be brought to light, are unwilling to expose any delinquent minister of the Roman Church" (*Annales, ad annum 1125, c. 12*).

Not the glory of God but human vanity is served by those writers of histories either of the Church in general or of their parish or institute in particular who with forethought fail in historical truthfulness: the mere fact that they, studiously rouging human weaknesses, present especially their founders and pioneers as per-

sons of heroic cultural stature, in which no human frailty ever appeared, lays them open to suspicion of historical misrepresentation. Pious fiction with a historical background is not church history. On account of this tendency—at times not the choice of the writers but a restriction imposed upon them by circumstances beyond their control—at least one Catholic university has adopted the policy of counseling its graduates not to take the history of their community as the subject of their dissertation.

The author of this centenary history of St. Meinrad Archabbey is under obligation only to truth; this he will tell, God helping, as he finds it in the sources at his disposal. This history will be drawn almost exclusively from firsthand sources, namely from documents and correspondence, both official and private, of the men who have shaped it; moreover, during the sixty-two years of his sojourn at the Archabbey the author has been privileged not only to see the larger part of its history in the making but also to know some of its earliest pioneers, such as Father Isidor Hobi, O.S.B., and others. True, only a small part of its written historical sources was saved from the fire that in 1887 destroyed the Abbey, but much valuable correspondence from Einsiedeln was found providentially preserved in several rectories of parishes formerly in charge of Fathers from the Archabbey. Besides, the letters of the pioneer Fathers and of Maurice de St. Palais, Bishop of Vincennes, to the Abbey of Einsiedeln, were preserved in the archives of the Abbey there, and duplicates of letters sent from Einsiedeln to St. Meinrad were kept. All that material at Einsiedeln was carefully typed by Father Gabriel Verkamp, O.S.B., who during his years of study at Sant' Anselmo, Rome, performed this truly herculean task in his summer vacations at Einsiedeln. All that work, bound into thirteen volumes of 1,578 full, legal-sized pages of single-space typing, is now kept in the archives of St. Meinrad Archabbey. This collection will be referred to simply as St. Meinrad Letters. (In the footnotes, the reference to this collection will be St. M. Ll., with indication of volume and page, of the name of the writer of the letter and of the addressee, and of the date.) The author of this history has personally transcribed

—some material was typed for him—from one to two thousand pages of correspondence in the archives of Conception Abbey, Missouri, of St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kansas, of St. John's Abbey, Minnesota, and of St. Vincent Archabbey, Pennsylvania; in the archives of the several Missions of St. Meinrad Archabbey in the Dakotas; in the archdiocesan archives of Omaha and of Baltimore; in the archives of Notre Dame University, Indiana; of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, Washington, D.C.; in the National Archives, Department of the Interior; and in the archives of the War Department, Washington, D.C. He was shown the most gratifying courtesy from the personnel of all these archives. He has not had the opportunity of extending his research to several other monastic and diocesan archives, yet he feels secure in stating that this history of St. Meinrad Archabbey will be found to rest on well-authenticated data, whatever the literary merits or faults of the work.

THE AUTHOR

St. Meinrad Archabbey

Feast of All Saints of the Order

November 11, 1953

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CHAPTER I

THE MOTHER MONASTERY, MARIA-EINSIEDELN

IN THE YEAR of our Lord 1934, the Monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Einsiedeln in the Canton of Schwyz, Switzerland, upon the completion of the thousandth year of its foundation struck a commemorative medal the reverse of which bears this legend: "934-1934. 1000 years of Prayer and Work according to the Rule of our Holy Father Benedict." These more than a thousand years of monastic life are the fruit with which heaven has blessed the life of the martyred hermit-monk, St. Meinrad.¹

Meinrad was born of noble Alemanic parents, in the days of Emperor Charlemagne, about the year 797, in the *Sülichgau*, in southwestern Germany; some historians connect the family with the Hohenzollern, later the Imperial Family of Germany. The child

¹ The most ancient and, historically, most reliable source for the life of St. Meinrad is the *Vita sive Passio Venerabilis Heremitaë Meginrati*. The author of the *Vita* is unknown, but, to all appearance, he was a monk of Reichenau. The oldest (9th or 10th century) and most authentic parchment manuscript of the *Vita* is preserved at St. Gall (Stiftsbibliothek); subsequent copies contain slight variations and amplifications. The *Vita*, together with an introduction and critical notes, is printed in *Beilage I* of Odilo Ringholz's, O.S.B., *Geschichte des fürstlichen Benediktinerstiftes U. L. F. von Einsiedeln* (Einsiedeln, 1904), *I Band*, pp. 647-652. In 1378, George of Gengenbach made this factual account of the life and death of St. Meinrad the basis of his chronicle of Einsiedeln—*Incipit originale de capella*, etc.; however, he interpolated much legendary material that popular fancy had woven around the memory of the Saint. We have followed the account of the original *Vita*. Gengenbach's chronicle, too, is printed in Ringholz, *ibid.*, *Beilage I*, pp. 653-657.

was given the name Meginrat, which means "lofty counsel." Later the name was written Meginrad, also Mehinrad, eventually contracted into Meinrad.

When the boy was old enough to be in school, his father took him to the Benedictine abbey that St. Pirmin had founded in 742, on the island of Reichenau, in Lake Constance, and for his education entrusted him to the distinguished monk Erlebald, a relative of the family. Erlebald was highly gratified over his charge and with much zeal devoted himself to the task of tutoring the young Meinrad. Even in his early years showing a tendency to turn aside from the trivialities to which youth is prone, the boy eagerly absorbed the teaching of his master; and such were his intellectual and moral attainments that, at the urging of his teacher, he was ordained a deacon at the age of twenty-five and, not long thereafter, a priest.

Erlebald was aware of the worth of his former pupil. After Erlebald became Abbot of Reichenau (822-838), he counseled the young priest to embrace the monastic life; whereupon Meinrad became a monk at Reichenau.

Before long, about 824,² Erlebald placed Meinrad at the head of a small monastic establishment (*cellula*), to which a school was attached. This foundation was at Benken,³ not far from the north-eastern shore of Lake Zurich, Switzerland. While Meinrad was engaged in this work, there grew in him an ever stronger longing for a more immediate and intimate intercourse with God. He could consult with his Abbot about the realization of his fond wish with all the more prospect of success because the school at Benken was to

² Odilo Ringholz, O.S.B., *Geschichte des fürstlichen Benediktinerstiftes U. L. F. von Einsiedeln* (Einsiedeln, 1904), I Band. (*Vom heiligen Meinrad bis zum Jahre 1526*), p. 27. This is a very extensive and thorough work; it is to be regretted that up to date this work has not been continued. It possesses additional value by reason of its eighteen supplements, which contain reprints of ancient sources and documents, with critical notes by the author.—An extensive and illustrated resumé is to be found in "*Tausend Jahre Maria-Einsiedeln*," *Gedenkschrift von P. Rudolf Henggeler*, O.S.B., 1934. *Sonderdruck aus "Alte und Neue Welt."*

³ Odilo Ringholz, O.S.B., *Oberbollingen oder Benken? Separat-Abdruck aus dem "Anzeiger für Schweiz. Geschichte"* 1897, No. 3, pp. 473-480.

be closed. When his longing had crossed the threshold of resolution, Meinrad one day took a number of his pupils on a fishing trip to the southern shore of the lake. While the boys were occupying themselves with fishing in a mountain stream, he set out to explore the neighboring solitude. He found a place to his liking; it was on the ridge of Mount Etzel, near the pass, overlooking Lake Zurich nearly two miles to the west. As this was crown land, he also visited the Royal Court at Cham, very probably to procure from the proper official a royal grant to settle in the part of the forest he had surveyed. This accomplished, he returned with his charges to the cloister.

A short time after this, in 828, Meinrad with the approval of his Abbot erected his hermitage on Mount Etzel, where he spent seven years devoting himself most fervently to the things of the spirit.

To his sorrow, his saintly way of life gradually attracted many visitors; wherefore, fearing spiritual loss to himself, he sought a more secluded spot about three and one half miles farther south, between the mountains, in what then was called the Dark Forest.

Other hermits of the surrounding country and especially a certain Abbess Heilwiga aided him in the construction of the necessary buildings—mainly a chapel, which Meinrad dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary,⁴ and a dwelling. Here he spent the twenty-six years of the remainder of his life in prayer and work. That he did not make himself dependent, in the strict sense of the word, upon the charity of others appears from the fact that he kept some chickens;⁵

⁴ *Annales Heremi Deiparae Matris Monasterii in Helvetia Ordinis S. Benedicti . . . Auctore R. P. F. Christophoro Hartmanno ibidem Monacho. (Friburgi Brisgoviae ex typographia Archiducali. A. D. N. 1612), p. 11.*—Up till the twentieth century this quarto volume of 478 pages was the only notable history of Einsiedeln.

⁵ In case one finds this assertion strange, even provocative of contradiction, one should consider that the "*pulli*" are spoken of in the *Vita* as quite distinct from the "*corvi*." (One need not concern oneself with the legendary embellishments of the *Chronicle* by George of Gengenbach.) First of all, according to lexicographers, the word *pullus*, in general, designates a young animal; a specifying modifier must be added to express what kind of young animal is meant, for instance, "*pullus equinus*," "*pulli pavonini*," also "*pulli gallinacei*"; but in particular, and when used without a modifier either expressed or implied,

he also cleared and cultivated a plot of ground around the buildings. True, he received some gifts from charitable friends or from those who wanted to express their gratitude for spiritual help they had received from him; but all such gifts he distributed as alms to those who sought him in this deep solitude. Even two ravens learned to know his beneficent hand; later these were to become famous in the Einsiedeln monastic coat of arms. Occasionally some of Meinrad's former confreres visited him here in the *Einsiedelei* (hermitage); one of these later narrated how one night during his visit he was witness to a heavenly vision accorded to the saint. Others attested to similar favors granted to Meinrad.

It was to be expected that the enemy of mankind would begrudge Meinrad his peaceful and meritorious life and would be chagrined at the good accomplished throughout the neighborhood; *pullus* designates a young fowl, a chicken, even as our English "pullet." *Corvus*, of course, is "raven," nothing else. Secondly, the description that the *Vita* gives of the behavior of the frightened "*pulli*" is characteristic of chickens, not of ravens. Let anything disturbing enter a farm yard, and the chickens, screaming and looking for cover, will scatter in opposite directions: "...the '*pulli*' that the venerable man had raised (*nutrierat*) in that place, seeing them[the murderers] come near, scattered, as though pursued by a fox, throughout the solitude, filling the woods with unusual cries and unheard-of noise, the echoes rebounding." Two quick-winged ravens, strong of beak and sharp of claws, would not have had to fear a fox; besides, they could in an instant have been out of reach on the roof, or on a tree at the edge of the clearing. There is quite a different description of the demeanor of the ravens coming upon the scene; theirs was a battle cry, and they took up the pursuit, occasionally darting down upon the heads of the murderers: "As these were fleeing, the ravens [*"corvi,"* not, as before, "*pulli*"] which were accustomed to come in their usual manner to the living servant of God and to receive food at his hands, betrayed the perpetrated crime by pursuing the robbers and filling the woods with loud cries and diving as close as they could down upon the heads of them, as if wanting to avenge the dead man."—But a hermit eating eggs or even the meat of fowl! Why not? St. Benedict forbids as food (except for "the very sick and weak") only "the flesh of four-footed animals" (Rule, c. 39). It is considered to be beyond doubt that, in the days of St. Benedict and for centuries thereafter, birds were regarded by many as fare compatible with abstinence. (Cf. Delatte, Abbot Paul, O.S.B., *The Rule of St. Benedict. A Commentary*. 1921. P. 274). In the raw Swiss climate St. Meinrad could not live like the Fathers of the Desert.

deed, by various molestations he repeatedly endeavored to make the solitude unbearable to the saint. Having failed in these efforts, the demon resolved to do away with the holy hermit. One evening, two men came to the village over at the lake shore and inquired about the road to the hermitage. Given the information, they set out the next morning, expecting to find valuable treasures in the hermit's cell. Should he resist, they would not hesitate to kill him to obtain their coveted prize. The men arrived at the hermitage just when Meinrad had finished Mass. Interiorly apprised of their coming and intent, he had offered the holy sacrifice all the more fervently and had taken the Body of our Lord as viaticum. When the men arrived, he did not at once open the chapel door, which he had bolted from within, but for some time continued in prayer, recommending his soul to God and to the saints whose relics he had in the chapel. He pressed the reliquaries to his breast, evidently intent upon shielding them from profanation.

This the two villains observed through an opening in the wall. To them the material of the reliquaries was a prize. Thereupon, as they threatened to break in, Meinrad opened the door and greeted them kindly. Letting them know that their design was no secret to him, he invited them to enter the chapel to pray while he would prepare a refreshment for them. They entered the chapel, but not to pray. Its simple furnishings disappointed them, and they at once followed the saint into the inner part of the house.

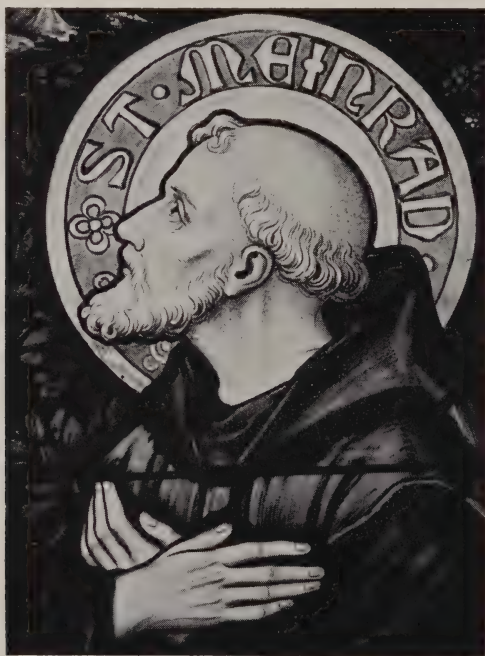
Meinrad gave them some of his wearing apparel—perhaps to appease them—and offered them refreshments. But they wanted the treasures they thought lay concealed somewhere. Attacking the saint with fists and clubs, they beat him to death. Meinrad thus became a martyr in the heroic performance of the virtue of hospitality and in the guarding of sacred relics.

Since supernatural signs immediately gave testimony to the sanctity of their victim, the murderers, leaving the sacred articles untouched, in nervous haste snatched together only a few pieces of the saint's apparel and hurried away. But the two ravens, coming on their usual quest for food and a kind word from their benefactor, sensed

the plight of their friend. With excited cries they took up the pursuit of the criminals and occasionally darted down upon their heads.

Pursued by the ravens, the villains hastened to the village. The unusual behavior of the hermit's pets aroused the suspicions of the people. The two men were held till investigation at the hermitage and the subsequent confession of the two brought to light the murder.

After due court procedure the two culprits were burned alive. Abbot Walther of Reichenau, together with some of his monks, came



ST. MEINRAD, MARTYR

Detail from window in church of
Archabbey

to convey the body of "the holy martyr" Meinrad to the Abbey, where it was reverently interred. St. Meinrad died on the twenty-first day of January, 861.

From the time of his death and on through the centuries Meinrad was considered a saint and martyr. On October 6, 1039, his main relics were translated from Reichenau back to the hermitage. Ac-

cording to the *Annals of Einsiedeln*, Pope Benedict IX at that time added Meinrad to the list of saints;⁶ at any rate, the formal taking up and transfer of his relics, which took place during the reign of Benedict, and which could be done only with the permission of the diocesan bishop or of a synod, was in those days still considered equivalent to canonization. At that same time Abbot Berno of Reichenau composed the Office of the saint, which, in part, is the one still in use.

For more than forty years following the death of St. Meinrad his hermitage lay deserted; the buildings became ruins covered more by religious memory than by roofs, and the forest reclaimed the sunny patch that the industry of the saint had wrested from it.

In 906,⁷ St. Benno, a Suabian nobleman and a canon at the cathedral of Strasbourg, visiting the deserted hermitage, saw how very suitable it was for a monastery. He approached the Lords of Rapperswil, under whose dominion was the whole Dark Forest, to obtain permission to clear and cultivate a sufficient extent of land; then he induced a number of friends and domestics to dwell there and cooperate with him in his project. And so St. Meinrad's chapel, together with his lodging, was restored.

In 927, King Henry I recalled Benno to public life by appointing him Bishop of Metz; but when, toward the end of 928, enemies, dissatisfied with this appointment, blinded and mutilated Benno, he requested to be led back to his beloved Meinrad's Cell, where he died, on August 3, 940.

In 934, a few years after St. Benno's return to the hermitage, there came a third man who played a vital role in the foundation of the monastery of Einsiedeln, St. Eberhard.⁸ Eberhard, a relative of Benno, had resigned the position of Dean of the Cathedral Chapter of Strasbourg to join the religious in St. Meinrad's Cell. It was with the arrival of Eberhard that religious life in the hermitage made the transition from the eremitic to the monastic form, wherefore 934

⁶ *Annales Heremi*, p. 129; cf. *Chronicle*, by Gengenbach.

⁷ *Annales Heremi*, pp. 27-28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-67.

is taken as the year in which the monastery of Einsiedeln was founded.

The first documentary evidence for the existence of St. Meinrad's Cell as a monastery is contained in the public act of Emperor Otto I, dated October 27, 947.⁹ Duke Herman of Suabia stated that he had acquired possession of the land on which Meinrad's Cell was situated and that with his help the hermit Eberhard had there constructed a church in honor of Holy Mary and of St. Maurice and his Companions, and also a dwelling for the monks over whom Eberhard presided. In view of all this the Duke petitioned that the Emperor grant this monastic community, to which Herman had donated the land in question, the privilege of immunity, together with the right of free election of its Abbots. The Emperor granted this petition, thereby according to the monastery and all its possessions exemption from civil jurisdiction and placing it under his immediate protection, yet without interfering with the election of its Abbots. This Imperial Grant implied that the new Abbey now became a principality of the realm and that its Abbots were Princes—a prerogative that was expressly documented only later by King Rudolf I of Hapsburg in a royal decree of February 26, 1274.

On September 14, 948, Bishop St. Conrad of Constance, within whose diocese the new Abbey was situated, consecrated the large church that Abbot Eberhard had built over the cell of St. Meinrad. Eberhard had transformed the humble cell, which had consisted of a chapel and dwelling, into one shrine—a roofed chapel standing free within the church—and had dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin. This shrine became known, and is known even to our days, as the *Gnaden Kapelle*—the "Chapel of Graces." In connection with the report of the consecration of the church itself, the Annals of Einsiedeln narrate the much discussed "Consecration by the Angel" (*Engelweihe*) of the *Gnaden Kapelle*, of which sacred action, so it is reported, Bishop Conrad in prayer was granted a vision the night before he was to consecrate this chapel and the church.¹⁰

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-52.

From that time on, the name "Meinrad's Cell" gradually disappeared as the name of this monastery. But Herman the Lame (†1054), of Reichenau, still wrote of "the chapel in the monastery of St. Meinrad." The name *Einsiedeln*, which is the German equivalent for the older Latin word for "hermitage," is first referred to, as being in popular use, in a document by King Henry IV, dated May 25, 1073.¹¹

With allowance for periods of fluctuation, an exemplary religious life prevailed in this monastery during the first four centuries of its existence; during that time, Einsiedeln exerted a good influence even beyond the boundaries of Switzerland. The learned St. Wolfgang, for instance, formerly "dean of the clerics" at Trier, but since 965 a monk at Einsiedeln, became deeply imbued with its religious spirit, and, upon becoming Bishop of Regensburg, reformed St. Emmeram Abbey.¹²

However, toward the end of the fourteenth century, a decline set in at Einsiedeln both in temporal affairs and in religious discipline. The Canton of Schwyz infringed ever more upon the sovereignty and the temporalities of the monastery; moreover, the fact that at that time sons of only high nobility were received into the community was not conducive to monastic discipline: the few monks who still were there—more as beneficiaries of the monastery's temporal goods than as men pledged to a mortified life—were intent rather upon relaxation than upon observance of discipline. In 1402, the community consisted of three members; in 1480, of two; in 1513 the aged Abbot Conrad of Hohenrechberg appointed the only monk remaining, Diebold by name, to manage the affairs of the monastery. Diebold, who secured the services of the secular priest Ulrich Zwingli—at that time still in good standing—to administer to the faithful of the town of Einsiedeln, later joined Zwingli in his religious errors and fell together with him in the battle of Kappel. Thereupon, in 1526, the civil authorities of Schwyz appointed a layman Regent

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

¹² J. B. Mehler, *Der Heilige Wolfgang, Bischof von Regensburg* (Regensburg, 1894), p. 7 ss.

and *Stadholder* of the monastery and its temporalities and, upon the Abbot's resignation, brought Louis Blarer from the Abbey of St. Gall to Einsiedeln and of their own authority installed him as Abbot on September 1, 1526. It was only in 1533 that Pope Clement VII acknowledged Louis as Abbot.

Louis' first task was to receive new members. Fortunately, breaking with tradition, he now received as novices sons of the common people also. One of these, Joachim Eichhorn, became his successor, in 1544. Eichhorn deserves the name of second Founder of Einsiedeln. He received twenty-six new members and with them re-inaugurated monastic discipline. He managed to have the debts lifted, and was also intent upon procuring an adequate education for the members of the community, though it was only about sixty years later that courses in philosophy and theology were introduced in the monastery itself. And so a new flourishing period of Benedictine life developed in Einsiedeln, a period that lasted until 1798.

It was toward the end of this period, more precisely from 1782 till 1785, that Abbot Beat Küttel (1780-1808) succeeded in having the various sources of contention of long standing between the monastery and the Bishop of Constance removed, though not without sacrifice on the part of the monastery. The agreement entered into dealt mainly with jurisdictional matters and the use of the pontificals on the part of the Abbot; it was approved by the Holy See on February 1, 1785.¹³ In keeping with that agreement, the monastery no longer enjoyed any jurisdiction independently of the Ordinary of the Diocese in matters of pastoral work.

The political upheaval throughout Europe caused by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars with their sequels also affected Einsiedeln.

Abbot Beat Küttel was the last Prince-Abbot of Einsiedeln, the monastery's principality ceasing with the Holy Roman Empire on

¹³ Rudolf Henggeler, O.S.B., *Professbuch der Fürstlichen Benediktiner Abtei Unserer Lieben Frau zu Einsiedeln. Festgabe zum Tausendjährigen Bestand des Klosters. Monasticon-Benedictinum Helvetiae. III Band*, (Einsiedeln Abbey, 1933), p. 166; cf. p. 145.

August 6, 1806. The flight to Einsiedeln of many French refugees, among them a number of the Benedictine Congregation of St. Maur, became a burden to the monastery. Moreover, by the reception of these refugees Einsiedeln incurred the displeasure of the French authorities. In view of the uncertainty of the situation the Abbey thought it prudent not to accept any more novices. The last religious profession was made on August 15, 1796.

On May 3, 1798, the French troops, who had defeated the Swiss, moved into Einsiedeln. The Abbot and most of the monks had fled a few days previously, saving what they could of the valuables, especially the famous statue of Our Lady of Einsiedeln. Even the few monks who had remained were forced to leave shortly after the arrival of the French and were scattered over various countries. The monastery was robbed of everything worth-while. The sacred chapel was torn down; its beautiful marble veneer work was stored away in a cellar and the stones of its walls were used to build a shop in the town of Einsiedeln. The property of the monastery was secularized and, on September 17, 1798, the monastery itself was declared suppressed.¹⁴

When in 1802 the Abbot and, gradually, the monks returned, they not only had to reclaim and regain the former possessions—in doing so, much had to be sacrificed—but they had also to rebuild and repair the buildings. The statue of Our Blessed Lady, which for seven years had been hidden away here and there in Switzerland and elsewhere, was brought back in triumph only in 1803; but it could not be enthroned in the former shrine till 1817, in the days of Abbot Conrad Tanner (1808-1825). Most of the material of the wrecked chapel having been regained and again used as building material, the present chapel within the church was erected on the spot where the old one had stood. Above all, monastic life according to the Benedictine pattern of prayer and work was resumed.

Had the Monastery of Einsiedeln at that period not been blessed with outstanding Abbots, it would probably have shared the fate

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

of many other religious institutions. It was through the efforts of Abbots Beat Küttel and Conrad Tanner that the so-called enlightenment and rationalism of those times, which also entered some monasteries and brought about their decline and even ruin, were kept out of Einsiedeln, and that the traditional monastic discipline continued to prevail.¹⁵

Abbot Beat insisted above all upon the decorous recitation and solemnization of the Divine Office and, in general, upon the safeguards of spiritual life.

Not content with their own spiritual advancement alone, the monks devoted themselves with renewed fervor to the care of others both by attending to the thousands of pilgrims that annually flocked to the shrine and by faithfully doing pastoral work in the various parishes, mission stations, and religious institutions entrusted to their care.

At Einsiedeln a loving devotion to Mary dates back to the days of St. Meinrad himself. Even then his chapel, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, was a place of pilgrimage to a certain extent. This chapel, in which was the celebrated statue of "Our Dear Lady of Einsiedeln"—the present statue dates only from about the middle of the fifteenth century—has at all times been the center of attention for the pilgrims.¹⁶ The thought suggests itself that it is the childlike devotion to the Mother of God that imparts to the religious life in the Monastery of Einsiedeln an artlessness and warmth that can be designated best as "family spirit." This spirit, rooted in the democratic disposition of the Swiss, respectful of authority but opposed to regimentation, greatly influences the dealings of the monks with one another.

The spirit of scholarship that St. Wolfgang had created at Einsiedeln continued to be fostered, though more in some periods than in others. Previous to 1804, however, Einsiedeln had indeed attended

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 165; 168; 175-182.

¹⁶ Odilo Ringholz, O.S.B., *Wallfahrtsgeschichte Unserer Lieben Frau von Einsiedeln* (Freiburg i. Br., 1896).



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to the education of its own members¹⁷ but had not, except on a small scale, interested itself in the education of externs at the monastery. It was at the college at Bellinzona, which the monastery took over in 1675 after the Jesuits had given it up, that the monks first conducted a school of considerable size. Einsiedeln had not been inclined to take over this school; it did so only upon being urged by the civil authorities, who had been encouraged by the Papal Nuncio. Once committed to the work, the monks made a success of it.¹⁸ When in the days of Abbot Beat a number of monks, especially the younger ones, advocated the reopening and expansion of the monastery's educational activity at home, they found him reluctant to consent until a program had been worked out that made the project appear compatible with monastic life.¹⁹ After that the monastic school, equipped with an efficient staff of teachers, developed into a large Gymnasium and a Lyceum.²⁰ The Gymnasium covered six years of study, the Lyceum two years.

Hand in hand with the cultivation of the things of the soul went dramatics, poetry, music, both vocal and instrumental, and other arts. Einsiedeln has produced a fair quota of prominent authors²¹ and composers.

In recording the cultural work of Einsiedeln, one may also not overlook the fact that the monks turned the wilderness of the Dark Forest into fields, pastures, and towns. The horse and cattle farms of Einsiedeln, its dairy, and its garden are widely known. In connection with this physical activity must also be mentioned the various shops and other establishments, among them a printing office. The printing office was active from 1664 to 1798, when the French carried

¹⁷ Odilo Ringholz, O.S.B., *Geschichte des fürstlichen Benediktinerstiftes U. L. F. von Einsiedeln*. I. Bd., p. 134.

¹⁸ Rudolf Henggeler, O.S.B., *Professbuch*, p. 139.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

²⁰ *Jahresberichte über die Lehr- und Erziehungsanstalt des Benediktiner-Stiftes Maria Einsiedeln*. Since 1852, there has been added to the *Jahresbericht* a monograph—"Programm"—of literary worth, by one of the professors.

²¹ Dr. Karl J. Benziger, *Geschichte des Buchgewerbes im Fürstlichen Benediktinerstifte U. L. F. v. Einsiedeln* (Einsiedeln, 1912), pp. 235-286.

it off.²² All these activities combined to make the monastery self-sustaining according to the mind of St. Benedict. It is especially in this physical activity that the Lay Brothers, few though they are, have always contributed to the cultural mission of the monastery.

The family spirit of Einsiedeln has been a beneficent factor also in the Swiss Congregation, in the founding of which, in 1602, Einsiedeln had a leading role.²³ Furthermore, this same spirit has become a blessing to the whole Order. In the very opening sentence of the Congregation's *Notes and Observations*, the personal element is stressed as the basis of its association, inasmuch as it is taken to be made up of "monastic persons."²⁴ Historians of monachism, in praising the spirit of the Swiss Congregation, indirectly speak in praise of Einsiedeln. Abbot Butler, of Downside Abbey, writes:

Lowest in point of organization, but highest in point of fidelity to old Benedictine ideas, is the Swiss Congregation. It has a little volume of most excellent *Notae* in explanation of the Rule, but no code of constitutions. . . . Abbot Molitor recognises the special position of the Swiss Congregation; he says that it hardly goes beyond the lines of the national chapters of the *Summi Magistri*; it is not a corporation, and the connection between the monasteries is no more than extrinsic conjunction. Benedictines may be glad that there is still in our day this survival of old-world Benedictinism; and may rejoice that it is justified by the solidly excellent results it achieves in the venerable abbeys of Switzerland.²⁵

Even though the monastery had succeeded in reclaiming many of its rights and possessions and especially in restoring within its walls the traditional Benedictine life, there were very annoying, at times discouraging transactions both with the cantonal and the

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 143-178.

²³ Rudolf Henggeler, O.S.B., *Professbuch*, p. 116.

²⁴ *Notae et Observationes in Regulam Sui Patris nostri Benedicti uniformitate Monasteriorum Congregationis Helveto-Benedictinae olim anno 1636 receptae et approbatae novissime vero a. 1748 adauctae et confirmatae*. Old manuscript in the library of St. Meinrad Archabbey.

²⁵ Abbot Cuthbert Butler, O.S.B., *Benedictine Monachism* (London, 1919), p. 256.

national Government. More than once the future seemed so uncertain that Abbot and Chapter were on the lookout for a place in foreign lands where they could migrate to enjoy a more secure existence.²⁶ In the days of Abbot Conrad Tanner and, again, of Abbot Cölestin Müller (1825-1846), the foundation of a monastery in Galicia, of the Austrian Empire, was considered, but no conclusion was reached.²⁷ King Louis I of Bavaria had favorably received the request of Abbot Cölestin that the monks of Einsiedeln, if compelled to leave Switzerland, be allowed to take over one of the old, suppressed monasteries in Bavaria.²⁸

During the early years of Abbot Henry IV Schmid von Baar (1846-1874), the political condition in Switzerland continued to threaten the very existence of the monastery; moreover, its financial resources were drained by the unjust exactions levied upon it in consequence of the *Sonderbund* War.²⁹ Another blow was struck when, on May 28, 1852, the government of the canton of Ticino drove the Fathers from the school at Bellinzona, which they had conducted very successfully since 1675.³⁰

This last blow, which Einsiedeln felt keenly, became a great blessing in disguise inasmuch as it made available several men for a new foundation. And it was at that opportune time that an urgent request came from the far-off United States of America to make a foundation there.³¹

²⁶ St. Meinrad Letters, Vol. III, p. 315, P. Athanasius Tschopp to Abbot Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., St. Vincent Archabbey, Feb. 18, 1858.

²⁷ Rudolf Henggeler, O.S.B., *Professbuch*, p. 199.

²⁸ *Loc. cit.* ²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203. ³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 203-204.

³¹ The request for a foundation in the Diocese of Vincennes, Indiana, was not the only one to come from the United States. Bishop John Martin Henni, of the Diocese of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, had in 1846 and even earlier, and again in 1852, urged that Einsiedeln make a foundation and conduct an educational institution in his Diocese (St. M. Ll. III, pp. 219-221, Henni to P. Gall Morel, O.S.B., Apr. 28, 1847; Aug. 27, 1852).—The Rev. Michael Oliveti was desirous of procuring a foundation for his colonization project in or near Whitehall, Washington County, in the Diocese of Albany, New York (St. Meinrad Archabbey Archives, drawer 12, folder *Abbas Henricus Schmid*).—Buenos Aires, Argentina, also wanted Benedictines (*Ibid.*).

CHAPTER II

THE INVITATION TO MAKE A NEW FOUNDATION

THE THIRTEEN English colonies in North America had in the Revolutionary War victoriously upheld their Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776), and had constituted themselves the United States of North America.

With the admission of Kentucky into the Union, in 1792, the boundaries of the United States reached—exclusive of the land claims of several states—as far west as the Ohio River.

From the Ohio River westward to the Mississippi and northward to the southern boundary of Canada lay the vast Northwest Territory. Here the rival activities of the French from Canada and of the English from their Atlantic seacoast colonies dated back to the last fifteen years of the seventeenth century: the French had done most of the exploring; the English either by stealth or by force had gained control of the trade. The French, becoming alarmed, had constructed several military posts to protect their interests; one of these was the *Poste du Ouabache*, erected late in 1732 or early in 1733 on the eastern bank of the Wabash River (the post was called Vincennes only about thirty years later).

When, in 1763, France had ceded all its possessions in Canada to England, the French posts in the Ohio Valley, Vincennes included, also came under English control.¹

After the rebellion of the American colonies against England, the Canadian English incited the Indians to make hostile inroads into

¹ Charles Roll, *Indiana. One Hundred and Fifty Years of American Development*, (1931), I, pp. 12-49. 70-77; John B. Dillon, *A History of Indiana* (1859), p. 65.

Kentucky. And so Colonel George Rogers Clark mustered a force to break the English influence in the Illinois country and in the Ohio Valley. Lieutenant Governor Hamilton, the commander of Fort Sackville, as the English called Post Vincennes, surrendered to Clark on February 24, 1779; the town Vincennes itself had at once welcomed Clark's forces, favorably disposed thereto by its pastor, Pierre Gibault. In 1783, Virginia ceded its territorial rights, within which Vincennes lay, to the United States.

An Act of Congress, dated May 7, 1800, created out of the western portion of the Northwest Territory the Indiana Territory. This at first contained all the regions of the present states of Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, the part of Minnesota east of the Mississippi, and western Michigan, but by 1816 was reduced to the present limits of the State of Indiana. Vincennes was named the seat of government for the territory;² on May 13, 1800, the Senate confirmed William Henry Harrison as its first Governor.

By 1800, the total population in the Indiana Territory, including Negroes and slaves, was 5641, of which number not more than 2500 white people lived within the present limits of the State of Indiana.³ The number of Indians living in the whole territory was estimated at 100,000;⁴ those who were within the limits of the present State of Indiana were of the Algonquian group.⁵

Besides organizing the territorial government, Harrison's chief task was to obtain from the Indians a clear title of ownership.⁶ By 1838, not only every Indian title to land but the Indian himself had become extinct in Indiana, except a few Miamis in the northeast.

As a preliminary to the treaty at Fort Wayne with the Indians, June 7, 1803, Harrison employed Thomas Freeman, a surveyor, to establish the boundaries of the so-called Vincennes tract, in 1802 and

² *Annals of Congress*, I session, pp. 1498-1499.

³ *Indiana Historical Society Publications* (Indianapolis), III, p. 83.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, IV, p. 189.

⁵ David Bushnell I, Jr., "Native Village Sites East of the Mississippi," *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of Am. Ethnology, Bulletin* 69 (1902), p. 11.

⁶ Dorothy B. Goebel, "William Henry Harrison," *Indiana Hist. Collections*, XIV (1926), pp. 97-107.

1803. The southern line of this stretch of land, so far as Indiana is concerned, came across the Wabash at the southern corner of the confluence of the White and Wabash Rivers, ran east southeast, cutting diagonally through what was to be St. Meinrad, and arrived at a point 43 chains south of the northeastern corner of section 25, township 4 south, range 3 west; Freeman marked it with a rough sandstone marker, still in place. From this point the line turned at an angle of 90° north northeast to a point near Orleans; from there at the same angle to a point back to and across the Wabash; and from that point at the same angle to the point of beginning. The whole tract comprised about 1,152,000 acres.

The Freeman line still left the land south and, in part, east of the Vincennes tract in the possession of Indians. To obtain this also, Harrison, in a treaty concluded at Vincennes, August 18, 1804, induced the Delaware tribe to cede to the United States its claim to all the rest of the land between the Wabash and the Ohio south of the Freeman line and east thereof between the Ohio and, to the north, the road leading from the Falls of the Ohio to Vincennes. (The Delawares about the year 1770 had received permission from the Miamis and the Piankeshaws to occupy the country between the Ohio and the White Rivers, where at that time they had six villages.)⁷ The Piankeshaws, who also claimed territorial rights in the land involved in this deal with Harrison, ceded those rights in another treaty at Vincennes, August 27, 1804.⁸

When, in 1816, that part of the Indiana Territory which now is the State of Indiana had the requisite number of 60,000 free inhabitants, it petitioned Congress for admission as a state into the Union. Congress by a joint resolution, approved on December 11 of the same year, admitted the territory as the State of Indiana. The seat of government of the new state, which had been at Corydon since May 1, 1813, was, on January 24, 1824, transferred to Indianapolis.

⁷ Fred. Webb Hodge, "Handbook of American Indians," (*Smith. Inst., Bureau of Am. Ethn., Bulletin 30, Part I, p. 385*).

⁸ Dillon, *History of Indiana*, pp. 418-419.

Up to about 1840, civilized culture in the state was primitive; the word "Hoosier," with which the people of Indiana were nicknamed, commonly implied indolence, uncouthness and general lack of culture, though some used the term more considerately.⁹ This lack of culture was noticed by travelers especially along the southern Indiana shore of the Ohio River where pioneer elements from southern states, largely from Kentucky, had settled.¹⁰ However, it is a fact that where German immigrants settled, though the beginnings were poor and hard, the finer things of civilized life soon budded forth as though spontaneously. "The early [Yankee] pioneer, got all out of life possible. The commercial and religious thoughts, as a rule, came into the country with the German pioneers to remain."¹¹

Culture, however, is a relative concept. An Englishman who in 1817 or 1818 visited the Rappite colony at New Harmony, Indiana, wrote: "I observe that these people are very fond of flowers, by the bye; the cultivation of them, and musick [sic] are their chief amusements. I am sorry to see this, as it is to me a strong symptom of simplicity and ignorance, if not a badge of their German slavery."¹² Education by means of common schools was indeed provided for in the Constitution of the State and in subsequent enactments, especially of 1821 and 1824, but there were no sufficient funds.¹³

The Constitution of the United States of America, adopted in 1787, together with the Bill of Rights appended to it, soon proved itself an effective governing instrument for the procurement of public welfare in things religious as well as secular.

On its part the Constitution that the State of Indiana framed and adopted at the convention at Corydon, from June 10 to June 29, 1816, was—specifically as to freedom of worship—in accordance with the principles underlying the Declaration of Independence and

⁹ J. Finley, "The Word Hoosier," *Indiana Hist. Soc. Publ.*, IV (1907).

¹⁰ Lindley, "Indiana as Seen by Early Travellers," *Ind. Hist. Coll.* (1916), pp. 522-529, *et alibi*.

¹¹ George R. Wilson, *History of Dubois County*, (1910), p. 126.

¹² Lindley, "Indiana as Seen by Early Travellers," *Ind. Hist. Coll.* (1916), pp. 514-515.

¹³ Butler, *op. cit.*, pp. 564-574.

the Constitution, together with the Bill of Rights, of the United States.¹⁴ That was the religious situation in principle; in daily life, however, the Catholic Church in Indiana as well as in other states has repeatedly had to contend with popular prejudice and bigotry.

The Catholic Church was quick to avail itself of the religious freedom guaranteed in the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States. The Church laid the foundation for an organic religious development by establishing an Episcopal See at Baltimore, in 1789. In 1808 Baltimore was made a Metropolitan See, with Suffragan Bishoprics in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and in Bardstown, Kentucky; the latter included in its jurisdiction the Indiana Territory.

"The earliest church in Indiana was the Catholic Church."¹⁵ As early as 1749, Father Sebastian Meurin, S.J., began the church records at Vincennes, the cradle of the Church in Indiana; but one may assume that, since Vincennes was founded by Catholics, there were occasional priestly ministrations at the place previous to that year. Meurin remained till 1763.¹⁶ In 1768, the Bishop of Quebec sent Father Pierre Gibault to Vincennes. Gibault found Catholic life at Vincennes at a low level and his ministry was uphill work. He stayed until 1789.

Since the Indiana Territory had meanwhile been placed under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of John Carroll, Bishop of Baltimore, the latter, in 1792, sent Father Benedict Joseph Flaget to Vincennes. He remained until 1795. Father John Francis Rivet succeeded Flaget and did truly heroic work in and around Vincennes from 1795 till his early death in 1806. From then on, up until 1813, Indiana had no resident priest, but Fathers Donatien Olivier, from Illinois, and Stephen Badin and Charles Nerinckx, from Kentucky, visited it

¹⁴ Charles Kettleborough, "Constitution Making in Indiana," *Indiana Historical Collections* (1916), I, pp. 84-85.

¹⁵ Charles Roll, *Indiana. One Hundred and Fifty Years of American Development* (1931), I, p. 266.

¹⁶ Thomas T. McAvoy, *The Catholic Church in Indiana, 1789-1834* (1940), pp. 54-55.

occasionally. Father Elisha Durbin, from Kentucky, was probably the first priest to do more regular missionary work on the southern border of Indiana; he built the small log church, St. Mary's on the River, about seven miles north of Rome, Perry County, in 1824, to accommodate the Catholics, mainly from Kentucky, who had crossed the Ohio River;¹⁷ the town of Derby was laid out south of the church property only in 1835.

For several years preceding 1830, many Catholics from Maryland and Kentucky, some even from Virginia, Tennessee, and from the Carolinas, had immigrated into Knox, Daviess, and Martin Counties. There were also a goodly number of Irish; these came chiefly by reason of the work on the Erie Canal. A few Germans had also arrived. All these were taken care of, partly by Father John Leo Champomier, pastor of Vincennes, and, from 1831, by his successor, Father Lawrence Picot, and by Father Simon Lalumière; but these priests are not known to have extended their activity to south of the East Fork of the White River. Apart from isolated cases, as, for example, near Rome, Perry County, Catholic immigrants had not yet sought out Dubois, Spencer, and Perry Counties.

On May 6, 1834, the Holy See erected the Diocese of Vincennes and appointed Simon Bruté its first Bishop.

When Bishop Bruté arrived at Vincennes, on November 5 of that year, he was welcomed by his diocesan clergy, which consisted of one man—Father Lalumière.¹⁸ The Diocese extended over 53,000 square miles, of which 36,291 miles made up the State of Indiana, and the rest, 16,709 miles, embraced seven counties including Cook County, (in which was the town of Chicago) along the east side of Illinois.

¹⁷ Letter of the Rev. Augustus Bessonies to the *Cath. Telegraph*, August 30, 1849, reprinted in the *Acolyte*, April 24, 1926.—Rome was the nearest town to St. Mary's; Derby, which later grew up alongside St. Mary's, had not yet been founded.

¹⁸ *The United States Cath. Almanac; or, Dictionary, for the Year 1835* (Baltimore, 1834), p. 68.

Bishop Bruté developed a zealous activity during the five years of his episcopate.¹⁹

Beginning in 1836, a number of Catholic German immigrants entered land in the neighborhood of Evansville and Jasper (Jasper is in Dubois County). By the end of 1838 there were fifty such settlers—and that meant young families—near Jasper.²⁰

Father Maurice de St. Palais, who from the autumn of 1836 had been stationed at St. Mary's, Daviess County, realized that in his occasional visits to Jasper—he came once about every three months²¹—he could not do justice to this growing community, especially since he could not speak German.

At that time, Divine Providence led to the Diocese of Vincennes the very man whom Bishop Bruté needed: this man was Father Joseph Kundek, of the Archdiocese of Agram, Croatia. Born on August 24, 1810, he was ordained a priest on August 18, 1833. One day there fell into his hands a mission letter which mentioned that some missionaries were about to go to America. Buoyant of disposition and generous of heart, the young priest said on the spot: "What others can do, I also can do"; whereupon he resolutely presented himself at the headquarters of the Leopoldine Association, Vienna, Austria, to volunteer for the missions in America.

Kundek was installed as rector of the mission at Jasper, on September 28, 1838.

Father Kundek had no sooner got his bearings than he conceived a project of far-reaching consequence: convinced that Catholic immigrants from Germany would more successfully preserve their faith if they settled in communities of their own, where they might at least for a long time retain their language and their social customs—in many cases bound up with the practice of their faith—Kundek

¹⁹ Sister Mary Salesia Godecker, O.S.B., *Simon Bruté de Remur, First Bishop of Vincennes* (1931).

²⁰ Albert Kleber, O.S.B., *St. Joseph Parish, Jasper, Indiana. Centenary, 1837-1937* (St. Meinrad, Indiana, 1937), pp. 11-13.

²¹ Narrative of Mrs. Joseph Dischinger (nee Burkhart); she died in 1907. See Kundekiana, folder, *Chapter One* (Archives, St. Meinrad Archabbey).

set afoot an immigration project on a considerable scale.²² He was especially intent upon having Catholic Germans settle in the country around Jasper and toward the southeast and east of it and between Jasper and Troy. Troy, in Perry County, was a promising shipping port on the north bank of the Ohio, 31 miles by road south of Jasper; a state road, which for years to come remained in a primitive condition, led from Cannelton, through Troy, to Jasper. Boats coming from Pittsburgh down the Ohio River stopped at Cannelton and Troy on their way to New Orleans, and followed the same return route. Before the railways were developed in southern Indiana, Troy gave promise of becoming a good outlet for the products of field and forest in the country between the White River and the Ohio.

Kundek's aim was to have this stretch of virgin soil settled by Catholic Germans, who eventually would constitute a number of parishes. To this effect he entered 1440 acres of land, mainly in the southern part of Dubois County. Several substantial contributions that he received from the Leopoldine Association enabled him to make at least some of these purchases. The land thus obtained he resold at a moderate price to prospective Catholic settlers. Public records, both federal and county, attest to all these transactions.

In answer to Kundek's advertisements in Catholic papers, such as the *Wahrheitsfreund*, Cincinnati, many Catholic Germans came to settle in this district. Before long, Kundek founded along the Troy-Jasper road the town of Ferdinand (March 18, 1840) and was intent upon having Catholics settle in the town of Fulda, founded by a certain Milton Jackson in the beginning of December, 1845; these were to be not only church, school, and store centers for the surrounding country but also relay stations for the traffic between Jasper and Troy. The town of Celestine, 10 miles east of Jasper, was

²² This project is described in the author's *St. Joseph Parish, Jasper*, pp. 20-22; *Ferdinand, Indiana, 1840-1940; a bit of cultural history* (St. Meinrad, Indiana, 1940), pp. 15-20; *St. Pius' Parish, Troy, Indiana* (St. Meinrad, Indiana, 1947), pp. 14-20. For Kundek's reasons for his colonization project see "Schreiben des Missionärs Joseph Kundek zu Jasper... an se. fürstliche Gnaden Herrn Fürsterzbischof in Wien, Jasper am 12 October, 1846," *Berichte der Leopoldinenstiftung im Kaiserthum Oesterreich*, XX 49-51.

likewise founded by Kundek, on November 22, 1843.²³ Troy and its vicinity, though originally settled by non-Catholics, became Catholic to a considerable extent mainly by the immigration of Germans. The mission at Rockport, the County Seat of Spencer County, and other stations had also to be attended to.

The pastoral responsibility for the large Catholic population spread over this territory soon proved to be too much for one man. As early as August 2, 1842, Kundek wrote, referring only to Jasper and Ferdinand: "About 250 German Catholic families have exhausted not only my bodily but also my mental strength."²⁴ Repeated attacks of malaria and other maladies gradually sapped his still youthful and extraordinary energy, especially since proper medical aid could not be procured, for in sickness as well as in health he shared the poverty of his people.²⁵ On July 27, 1842, he wrote to the Leopoldine Association: "All of us are very poor." And again, on July 25, 1843, he spoke in pathetic terms of the needy condition of his parishioners: "In all my life I have never seen greater poverty than that of my people."

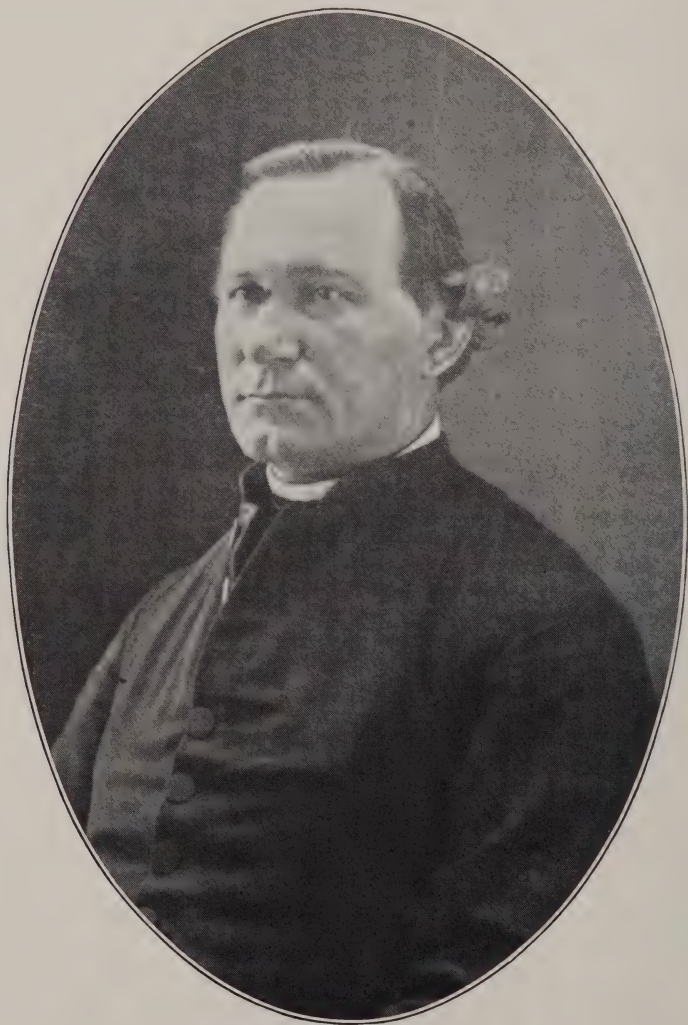
With Bishop Hailandière's permission Kundek looked about for German-speaking priests to come to his aid and eventually to take over the whole district. He invited the German Redemptorists at Baltimore to come and establish themselves in his territory. Father Alexander Cavitzkovitz, at that time the superior of that community, wrote in his diary, under date of June 15, 1841, that he was about to undertake a tour of the Middle West "to inspect several new foundations that were offered to us." Kundek met him at Cincinnati. They went first to Madison, Indiana, of which Father Alexander wrote, under date of July 12, 1841: "The prospects were not favorable to us." With regard to New Albany he wrote (July 14): "We

²³ Karl F. Bilger, *Geschichte der Gemeinde Celestine, Dubois County, Ind.* (Celestine, 1900), p. 8.

²⁴ *Der Wahrheitsfreund* (August 18, 1842), p. 405.

²⁵ "... Joseph Kundek... an... Fürsterzbischof in Wien. Jasper am 21 Mai, 1841; am 25 Juli, 1843," *Berichte der Leopoldinenstiftung...*, XV (1842), 51-55; XVII (1844), 30-35.

there found a frame church without a priest.—July 15. . . At Troy we found only ten Catholic families, who had lately settled there.—July 16 . . . From Troy we went on horseback to Ferdinand.” Here, too, he found nothing to impress him. On July 17, they continued their ride to Jasper. Of Jasper he had more to say; yet not even there did the prospects appear sufficiently promising to the Redemp-



FATHER JOSEPH KUNDEK

torists to induce them to accept this mission field.²⁶ As the district became ever more thickly settled and work and difficulties were multiplied, Kundek, commissioned by Bishop Bazin, again wrote to the superior of the Redemptorists, at that time John Nepomuk Neumann, to offer them "Ferdinand and Evansville" as centers for a Redemptorist field of activity. Neumann answered, on March 20, 1848, that, though he already had permission to accept one of these places offered them by Bishop Bazin, he could not do it, for lack of men.²⁷

Father Kundek expected to find some relief when, from 1843 on, several secular priests were appointed successively as his resident vicars at Ferdinand; but some of these were a disappointment to him and the Bishop.²⁸

On July 23, 1849, Kundek reported that more than 520 Catholic families were scattered over his territory, at that time 40 by 15 miles in extent.²⁹ Not only he and the Bishop, but also the people, especially those at Ferdinand, where serious difficulties had occurred, deplored the absence of efficient resident priests.

This need of his flock made Kundek conceive a new plan: consoling his people with the assurance that he would procure for them "*gute und ewige Priester*" ("good and everlasting priests"),³⁰ he set about to procure a Benedictine foundation from the monastery in Einsiedeln.

On October 3, 1848, Maurice de St. Palais, one of Bishop

²⁶ Archives, Mount St. Alphonsus, Esopus, N.Y.

²⁷ Archives, St. Meinrad Archabbey.

²⁸ Albert Kleber, O.S.B., *Ferdinand*, pp. 39-48.

²⁹ Kundek (July 23, 1849) to the *Catholic Telegraph* (Cincinnati), August 9, 1849.

³⁰ Father Bede O'Connor, O.S.B., preserved this phrase in his biographical sketch of Kundek in his "*Journal der Gemeinde zu St. Joseph in Jasper*," p. 8 (Archives, St. Meinrad Archabbey). When in 1939 the author was gathering material for the centennial history of the town and parish of Ferdinand, Miss Mary Gerber, born in 1851, recalled how her father, a friend of Kundek, used to speak of this expression of Kundek.

Bruté's early French recruits, was nominated Bishop of Vincennes; he was consecrated on January 14, 1849.³¹

Desirous of procuring priests and means from Europe, both the Bishop and Father Kundek arranged for a trip abroad—the Bishop to France and Belgium, Kundek especially to Switzerland. On April 17, 1851, the Bishop informed Kundek to hold himself in readiness to leave at the beginning of June.³²

Kundek, now vicar-general, left Jasper on June 15, but did not sail for Europe till October 29, 1851.

June 15, 1852, found Kundek at the monastery of Einsiedeln, from where he wrote: "It is this day a year ago that I left my Jasper, recommending my Missions to the blessed Virgin Mary. I renovated [he meant to say, "renewed"] my prayers today at the Altar of the B. V. M., divinely consecrated, supplicating not only for my Missions but for the whole Diocese."³³

Kundek petitioned not only the Blessed Virgin but also Abbot Henry IV to make a foundation in the Diocese of Vincennes; he felt confident that in this manner he was living up to the promise he had made to his missions, to procure for them "good and everlasting priests."

³¹ On his former visits to Jasper some had noticed that the coat sleeves of Father de St. Palais were worn at the elbows; hence, when the word arrived that he was nominated Bishop, some woman of Jasper passed the news on: "*Der Pfarrer mit dem verrissenen Kittel wird Bischof*—The pastor with the torn coat is to be Bishop."—Narrative of Mrs. Joseph Dischinger. (Archives, St. Meinrad Archabbey, Kundekiana, folder, *Chapter One*.)

³² Bishop to Kundek. Archives, St. Meinrad Archabbey.—It must have been shortly before his departure that Bishop de St. Palais made Kundek Vicar General of the Diocese, perhaps to procure more prestige for him in his negotiations in Europe; at least it was from then on that Kundek signed as Vicar General.

³³ Letter to the Servant of God, Theodore Guérin, superioress general of the Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana. (A copy in the archives of St. Meinrad Archabbey.)

CHAPTER III

SENDING OF EXPLORERS. BEGINNING OF ST. MEINRAD ARCHABBEY

ON JUNE 17, after a stay of only a few days, Kundek left Einsiedeln, taking with him the assurance that Abbot Henry looked favorably upon his petition.

After thinking the project over, the Abbot wrote to Kundek, then at Vienna, that he was willing to start a colony in the United States of North America, though, for the time being, only on a small scale, commensurate to the personnel and the pecuniary means available. As a start, two Fathers would be sent, who were to explore and to make recommendations of a suitable locality. In view of the fact that Kundek was knocking at many doors, the Abbot stressed the point that at least in the beginning of the new foundation all its members were to be from the same monastery, to insure uniformity in monastic observance.¹

With Kundek's assurance of full agreement on this point,² the Abbot developed his plan still further on August 27: the new foundation was to be a mission house of Einsiedeln, to be occupied and conducted by religious of that monastery, and was constantly to remain connected with it; its purpose was to be, at first, of as much help in the care of souls as would be compatible with a religious community life; eventually, however, it was to found a seminary for candidates for the priesthood, so that the mission country might

¹Letter, July 22, 1852, St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*.

²St. M. Ll. II, p. 7.

receive a constant supply of native priests. He also asked whether the foundation, if made, might rely on Kundek's continued support. In reply, Kundek again pledged himself to the project and wrote that the St. Ferdinand mission was at once to be taken over by the Benedictines.³



ABBOT HENRY IV SCHMID
VON BAAR, O.S.B.

On October 6, 1852, the Abbot sent Father Gall Morel to Rome to transact at the Holy See various affairs, among them the projected foundation. In a private audience that Pope Pius IX granted him on October 25, Father Gall presented the Abbot's memorial, in which, among other matters, the following project was also sub-

³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*; St. M. Ll. II, p. 2.

mitted: "Men endowed with both learning and authority have for many years unceasingly urged that in view of the needs of the times we devote ourselves also to the sacred task of the foreign missions, and, in particular, that our monastery establish in North America a so-called daughter house, connected with it and dependent on it, and for that very reason dependent on the Holy See; in which house young men are to be educated for the sacred ministry by the religious of our monastery and, having completed the course of studies, are to be placed at the disposal of the Bishops of that country, so that from that institute ever new laborers can be presented to the Church." The reason why Einsiedeln had not earlier acceded to various requests for a foundation in the foreign missions was the lack of personnel as well as of material means; but through the closing of the school at Bellinzona a sufficient personnel had become available for such an undertaking, and the monastery, trusting in Divine Providence as to the material means, was now willing to undertake such a foundation.⁴

The Holy Father indicated his conviction of the excellency of the project and expressed his great joy over the awakening of the ancient Benedictine missionary spirit in the monastery of Einsiedeln; he gladly gave the undertaking and all who would take part in it his blessing; he even suggested that the whole faculty at Bellinzona be transferred at once to America.⁵

Encouraged by the approval of the Holy See, Abbot Henry assembled the monastic Chapter on Nov. 19 and laid the whole affair before it for free discussion and vote. In due time the Chapter gave its unanimous and enthusiastic consent.

In compliance with a request of Father Gall, Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the Propaganda, on November 22 addressed to the Abbot its formal letter of praise and approval of the project and its prom-

⁴ Copy of the Memorial included in the Abbot's address to the Chapter, Nov. 19, 1852, St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*.

⁵ St. M. Ll. III, p. 254.

ise of authoritative action when the undertaking would have reached the proper stage.⁶

Einsiedeln insisted that the new foundation was to be and to remain a mission house of the monastery and subject to it. When, toward the end of December, Kundek, then in Rome, had in his wonted blunt manner said to Father Gall that, as soon as "his new monastery" would have twelve priest-members, it should be made independent of Einsiedeln, with an Abbot of its own, Father Gall disapprovingly reported Kundek's word to his Abbot at once.⁷

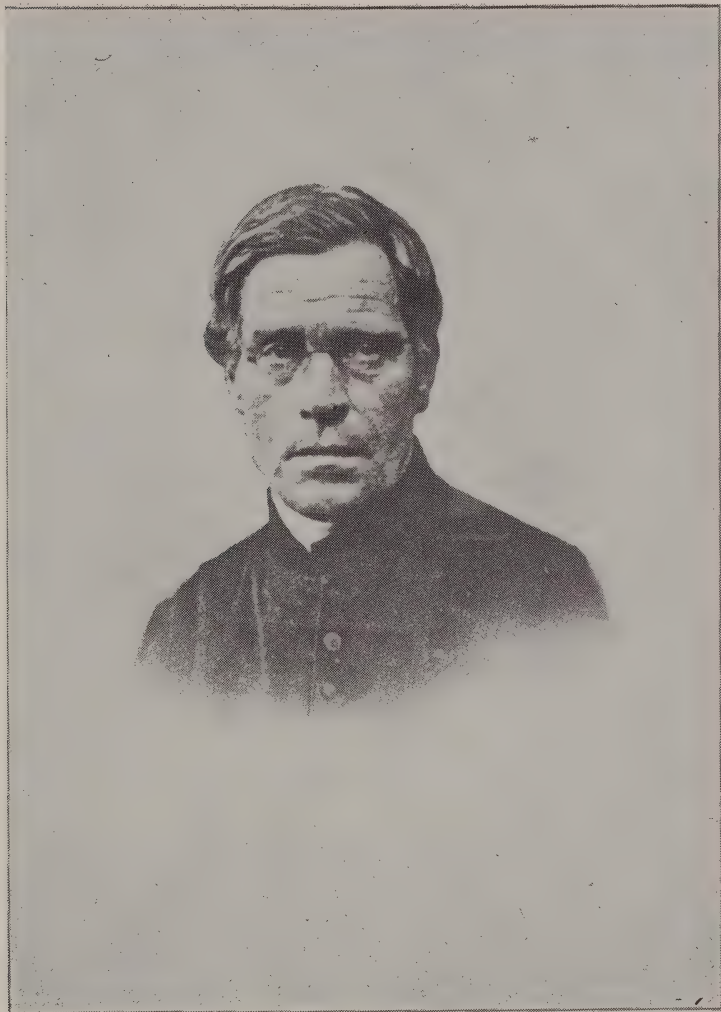
From among the many who volunteered for the new undertaking the Abbot selected only one, the young Bede O'Connor, to be the companion to the one whom the Abbot had personally chosen and had designated to be the superior, Father Ulrich Christen. The latter wrote in his diary in his somewhat high-flown and emotional manner that he would "never, eternally never" have volunteered for this mission, "in order not to forestall the choice of Divine Providence."⁸ The two continued to be referred to not as the Founders but as the two explorers—Josue (Father Ulrich) and Caleb (Father Bede)—sent to view the promised land and to make a report on the basis of which the Chapter might decide whether and where to make the foundation.

Ulrich Christen, born at Stans, Switzerland, on March 20, 1814, made his profession as a Benedictine in the monastery of Einsiedeln on September 29, 1832, and was ordained a priest on August 13, 1837. He taught in the monastic school from 1837 to 1844. He was made assistant pastor in October of that year, and was at the same time catechist at Willerzell, from 1843 to 1847. At the time of the *Sonderbund*, his incisive sermons brought on the anger of the self-styled "patriots," and he had to flee for the time being. He

⁶ Copy of Franson's letter, St. Meinrad archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*; St. M. Ll. III, p. 219.

⁷ St. M. Ll. III, p. 227.

⁸ Father Ulrich wrote in his diary from the beginning of the mission until April 3, 1853, and again, from April 30, 1857, until September 27 of that year. "*Reisebericht über die einsiedlisch-benediktinische Mission in Nord-america.*" It will be referred to as *diary* (archives, St. Meinrad Archabbey).



FATHER ULRICH CHRISTEN, O.S.B.

planned and supervised the building of the rectory at Willerzell, where he was the first resident curate until he was chosen to head the mission to the United States.⁹

Father Ulrich was a serious, energetic and hard-working man. But, unfortunately, he was sensitively fond of his own opinion

⁹ Rudolf Henggeler, *Professbuch*. Number 575.

to the point of resenting criticism and refusing to tolerate opinions opposed to his own. This trait of character made dealing with him difficult, both for his confreres and his superiors. Later, when the stress of difficulties made this trait still more noticeable, the Abbot acknowledged that he had made a mistake in not listening to the warnings of several Fathers when he appointed Father Ulrich to head the mission;¹⁰ they had told him he would never get Father Ulrich to admit having made a mistake.

Bede O'Connor was born of poor Irish parents, in London, on January 29, 1826. At the age of fourteen, the boy was taken to Einsiedeln. When he first tasted the gold-crust ed coffee buns of Einsiedeln, the naive city boy expressed surprise that in England they had not planted trees that bore such fine-tasting fruit. The creamy Swiss milk was at first somewhat disappointing to him; it did not have the "nice sky-blue color" of the London milk. As a poor student he received his education free at the monastic school. Besides the classic languages, he learned to speak and write German as perfectly as his native English. He also spoke French, though not well, and a little Italian. Professed on May 16, 1847, he was ordained a priest on September 15, 1851. From 1850 to 1852, he taught English and, from 1851, also penmanship at the monastic school. He was also Assistant Archivist.¹¹

Father Bede had many human qualities to recommend him: oratory seemed to be a natural gift of his; he was also a man of ready, congenial humor and pleasant disposition. But he had to struggle with his Celtic temper. Moreover, it was regrettable that he was somewhat hard of hearing—a defect which, so Prior Martin Marty later significantly reported to Einsiedeln, was "not only bodily." Further, possessed of an easy-going disposition, not given to worry, he would easily be overtaken by sleep and would sleep long and soundly. As to his personal appearance, he was somewhat finical for a monk.

On December 19, 1852, the students of the monastic school

¹⁰ St. M. Ll. II, p. 47; cf. IV, p. 430-432.

¹¹ Rudolf Henggeler, *Professbuch*. Number 599.



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presented a farewell program consisting of music and of speeches in prose and poetry. Significantly, its leading spirit was Aloys Marty, who years later was to become the first abbot of the new foundation. Another speaker, Johann [Andreas?] Mundwiler, was to be its second Abbot.¹²

¹² St. M. Ll. II, pp. 69-85.

Marty delivered the prologue and also gave the final speech. He thus began the prologue:

To one who knows that the history of the world does not consist in the great, noisy machinery of brilliant deeds, great battles, and conquests, but that it is the interior thought, a spiritual—hence externally insignificant—force, which shapes history and which controls the former, it is also clear that today we are celebrating the birthday of an event which in its small beginnings is of importance and which in due time and for a series of centuries is for thousands of human beings to be rich in achievements and blessing. . . .

After a few words expressive of devotion to their two professors about to leave for the inauguration of this project, Marty concluded the prologue in these words:

We consider this undertaking to be a return of the Benedictine Order to its original world-historical destiny, expressed most clearly in its beginning.

The first speaker had as a theme, *The Vocation of the Benedictine Order in the History of the World in General*. Mundwiler's theme was, *The Fulfillment of This Vocation as Demonstrated by St. Benedict Himself Sending St. Placidus to Sicily and St. Maurus to France*. Marty spoke on *The Sixth and the Nineteenth Century and its Benedictines—a Historical Analogy*.

There were other speeches; whereupon Marty, again referring to the mission into what he termed "the land of the future," concluded the whole program by saying "with force and emphasis," as the monastic chronicler recorded: "Over here or over there—*auf Wiedersehen!*"

That same evening, Father Athanasius Tschopp, the Dean of the monastery, dispensing with the usual spiritual reading in common, addressed a few hearty words to the two missionaries, assuring them of constant affection and support from all their confreres. Father Ulrich replied both in his name and in that of his colleague. At the end of his speech he read and presented a formal document, in Latin, in which the two vowed and promised to remain forever

connected with their monastery at Einsiedeln; as much as would be possible under the given circumstances, faithfully to observe all the duties and obligations that were then observed or that would in future be established at their monastery, according to the rule of St. Benedict and the Statutes; and not to accept or undertake anything in their mission except what had been approved for them and granted by their superiors at Einsiedeln; and to observe exactly and faithfully the commands and directions of their superiors at Einsiedeln, those already given them as well as those that would be given in the future. They also gave in advance their consent and approval to all the decisions that the monastic Chapter would make in their absence.¹³

The two missionaries left their monastic home on the following morning, December 20.¹⁴ Their necessary personal effects they carried with them; four boxes containing mostly ascetical and devotional literature, some compositions in Church music, and the more immediate requirements for chapel and household were shipped by freight in March 1853.¹⁵

The monastery could not contribute much financially toward the new foundation because its finances had been drained by the *Sonderbund War*, and because the hostile government might have taken alarm at the export of considerable sums into a foreign land. And so the Abbot had to rely upon contributions, especially from the various Mission Societies. The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, at Lyons, defrayed their traveling expenses to the amount of 1,000 francs for each; it also gave several thousand francs more to make possible at least a modest beginning of the new foundation. In general, however, the unfounded opinion prevailed that, since this was a project of the renowned monastery of Einsiedeln, no donations were needed.

When the fact that Einsiedeln contemplated making a new foundation in the United States of North America became generally

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-88.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹⁵ St. M. Ll. III, p. 239.

known, the news was received variously, according to the religious and political persuasion of the recipients. The hostile *Bund*, having reported the departure of the two missionaries, added mockingly:¹⁶ "It is believed that here the miracle could be repeated that the legend holds for Loreto and that, when the time has arrived, the angels will transfer the holy *casa* with the holy Virgin of Einsiedeln from the confederate land of the Swiss across the ocean to America to be for the Yankees what she believes she can no longer be for the Swiss. Time will tell." Other Swiss secular papers were more objective. Catholic papers were, of course, sympathetic. The *Wahrheitsfreund*, Cincinnati, Ohio, under the date of December 31, spoke of the new foundation as *Neu-Einsiedeln*.

The course of events from the time the two missionaries left Einsiedeln until Father Ulrich's arrival at Ferdinand, Indiana, is recorded in his diary.¹⁷

The two travelers spent the feast of Christmas with the English Benedictines at Douai. Though at first received with cautious reserve, they were heartily welcomed after they had convinced their hosts of the genuineness of their mission. They crossed the channel at Calais, on December 26. Arriving at London at about midnight, they took lodging in a small hotel.

The next day, they called at Father Bede's home, where, after a separation of twelve years, there was a touching reunion. Mother and sister at first were speechless. The mother embraced her son, affectionately stroked his cheeks and hands, as if to make sure it was he, while silent tears revealed the depth of her affection.

On December 28 they requested an audience with Nicholas Cardinal Wiseman to deliver to him a letter from their Abbot. They were greatly astonished at being admitted at once, still more when the Cardinal invited them to tea that evening—it was his custom once a week to invite a select group. He spoke to the party

¹⁶ No. 355. Dec. 23; *Zürcher Freitags Zeitung*, No. 52. Dec. 24. (Copied in St. M. Ll. III, pp. 209-211.)

¹⁷ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives.

of the project of the two young Benedictines and, without being requested, gave them permission to say Mass on board ship.

In the early morning of January 2, Father Ulrich with much effort succeeded in arousing the soundly sleeping Father Bede with the cry, "Fire!" When Father Bede finally opened his eyes, he calmly said, "Where?" Told that it was in the immediately adjoining house, from which they were separated by only one common wall, he dressed hurriedly and followed Father Ulrich downstairs. On their way they saw the owner or manager of the hotel, who had become panic-stricken by the alarm and was constantly crying, "Murder! Murder! Robber! Robber!" The man was frantically trying to dress, but, try as he would, he could not get his feet and legs through the sleeves of his inverted coat, bewailing at the same time that something must have happened to him overnight inasmuch as he could no longer put on his trousers. In view of this incident and of the impending sea voyage, Father Bede in a letter assured a confrere at Einsiedeln that they would have to go through fire and water for the new foundation.

Toward evening of January 5, 1853, the *Hermann*, a large and sturdy steamship, weighed anchor off Southampton and began to buffet a stormy sea westward. That night the storm grew to such an extent that the waves smashed the foredeck and threatened to swamp the forepart of the ship. After battling the waves for hours, the captain, not to endanger the passengers and the already damaged ship, decided that the prudent course lay in a return to the harbor.

On the morning of January 6, while the captain, the crew, and the rest of the passengers were worried and the ship trembled in every beam as it was making for the harbor, Father Bede, who through it all had slept the sleep of Jonas, was astonished to see land so soon.

After the necessary repairs had been made, the *Hermann*, on January 10, at noon, again plunged into the raging sea. In the course of that afternoon the sea grew so fierce that the captain had to cast anchor alongside the sheltering Isle of Wight. When, on January 11, orders had been given again to weigh anchor, the re-

sistance of the too firmly imbedded anchors broke the hoisting machinery. It was only on January 13, at 6:30 in the evening, that the ship could again set sail.

The whole voyage remained exceptionally stormy, with only an occasional let-up in intensity. Meanwhile, Father Ulrich spent most of his time learning English under the tutorship of Father Bede.

The joy of the two voyagers was great when they sighted the sky line of the land that they were to explore; but off Sandy Hook the big ship suddenly slid into a bank and listed to one side. It took two anxious hours of hard work to free the ship. The two "explorers" were convinced that the devil was making every effort to block the new foundation.

The two monks finally landed on January 31. They at once sent a joint letter to Maurice de St. Palais, Bishop of the Diocese of Vincennes, to announce their arrival and to inform him of the purpose of their mission.¹⁸ In this letter Father Ulrich manifestly went beyond his commission by assuring the Bishop that, if he would receive them, they would not investigate any other possibility of making a foundation. This limited them to Indiana and, of course, was a vexing restriction to the plans of Einsiedeln.

Because the Abbot had instructed them to inquire about the request of the Reverend Oliveti to make a foundation on his property, on the day after their landing they took the train to Albany, New York. There Father Theodore Nöthen, who gave them cordial hospitality, warned them against any dealings with Oliveti, a speculator in land—a warning that was corroborated by a Benedictine from St. Paul Monastery, Rome, who had had sad experience with Oliveti. On his part, Nöthen urged them to stay in the Albany Diocese: the Bishop, he said, had 100 acres of cultivated land for a monastery and he needed priests even more than the Bishop of Vincennes.

Father Nöthen insisted upon taking them to the Bishop. The Bishop assured them that he would be willing to provide for their support in every way possible to him. Since their mission was to

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-64.

Vincennes, he said, he would not restrain them from going there. But if Vincennes should prove to be unacceptable, he told them to come to him.

Father Joseph Ferdinand Müller, the Chaplain at the Royal Court at Munich, Bavaria, a warm patron of the undertaking and well acquainted with the situation in the United States, had cautioned Einsiedeln, not to reveal at once the ultimate purpose of this mission, but merely to let it be known that the Fathers were on their way to help out in the diocese of Vincennes. Otherwise, he thought, various Bishops along the route would offer them land to induce them to settle in their dioceses.¹⁹

On February 4 they started on their journey to the young Benedictine foundation, St. Vincent, near Latrobe, Pennsylvania. At Philadelphia they stopped to call upon Bishop Neumann in order to deliver their Abbot's personal message to him. He received them, as Father Ulrich wrote, with tender, winning simplicity; he offered them 1000 acres, and another place of 300-400 acres, mostly cultivated land, if they would begin a foundation there. All they could answer was that they would report his request.

On February 5 they arrived at Latrobe and walked the few miles to St. Vincent. "Now we were at home," Father Ulrich wrote in his diary. He compared the superior of St. Vincent, Father Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., to one of the very energetic Fathers at Einsiedeln. "We at once found him at our service and he at once began to figure about our future." To anticipate the Shrove Tuesday celebration, the Superior had ordered a small keg of beer to be brought from the monastery brewery for Sunday; the special dinner consisted of two dishes of food and a glass of beer. "We were the guests of honor; the charity of all the conventuals was the most delicious seasoning."

Father Boniface gave the two missionaries much useful counsel, largely the fruit of his experiences in ecclesiastical and economic life in America, and he promised to help them as much as he could in their undertaking.

¹⁹ St. M. Ll. III, p. 236.

They left St. Vincent on February 10. On their way to Pittsburgh they met Bishop O'Connor, who urged them to go to St. Louis, Missouri; he assured them that Archbishop Kenrick would welcome them and give them property whereon to make a foundation. On his own initiative he wrote for them a special recommendation to the Archbishop.

A steamer conveyed them from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Madison, Indiana, where they landed at nine o'clock the evening of February 14. They arrived at Terre Haute, by way of Indianapolis, at five o'clock the evening of February 16. One hour after midnight they started in a stage coach for Vincennes. All day long they rumbled and splashed through the monotonous landscape. Then the lumbering coach broke down. They rested on their traveling bags until a farm wagon could be procured, and then they continued their journey to Vincennes, where they arrived at eleven o'clock at night, on February 17.

At about nine o'clock of the following morning, they set out to call on Bishop Maurice de St. Palais, but only after they had made a visit to the Cathedral Church "earnestly to recommend their undertaking to God, to the Blessed Virgin, and to St. Francis Xavier," the patron of the Cathedral and of the Diocese. They next called at the Rectory. Since Father Ulrich could not yet converse in English and did not want to entrust his French to French ears, he addressed the Reverend Audran, who met them at the door, in what he thought was the happy medium for clerical exchange of thought—Latin. But Father Audran, after recovering from his first shock, hesitatingly said: "*Oh, non possum loqui latine*—(Oh, I can't speak Latin)." He then took them into the library to a Father Brandt, a young German priest, and soon they were conversing in Latin, French, German, and English. After a little while the Bishop entered. He, too, was quite shy of Latin; yet, when remembering some appropriate phrase, he would humorously say in French that he did not know he could speak Latin so well; but as the words came only haltingly, Father Guegen remarked, "Your Grace needs bellows."

In this unaffected atmosphere the two Benedictines at once felt

at home. The Bishop read the Abbot's official letter, which they had presented to him, and then said: "Go where you will. Look for the best place in the Diocese, and I will grant you all that is in my power. I will counsel you and will help you to the best of my ability. I indeed foresee that this Diocese will soon have to be divided, and I should like very much to see that a place near the episcopal city



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would be to your liking; but you can go to Oldenburg, Evansville, Ferdinand; you may also look for a place near Vincennes. You are free."

On February 3, Father Ulrich had sent his Abbot a lengthy account of the journey. The letter did not reach Einsiedeln.²⁰ He wrote again, on February 8.²¹ By March, the Abbot together with the whole monastery was greatly worried. They had read about the violent storms over the Atlantic and about fatal accidents and murders in the United States; the Abbot had without result inquired, even by telegraph, as far as New York. A letter should have arrived from New York at least a month previously. On March 3, somebody waited in vain until the last moment at the post office. Abbot Henry was very much worried, and the Fathers feared to express either hope or fear in his presence. It was after midnight on March 4 that the mail from Lucerne finally brought the letter that the two missionaries had sent on February 8. The Abbot was so overjoyed that, though the community had not yet risen for the four-o'clock matins, he roused them to break the great news to them.²² (A close examination of the envelope revealed that even this letter had been tampered with; subsequent official investigation found that the Postmaster at Basel had been the culprit.)

Unaware of the grief and almost mourning of which they were the occasion, Father Ulrich, on February 18, after a gratifying interview with the Bishop, wrote another report to his Abbot.²³

Father Ulrich probably missed the point when he reported that the Bishop had assured them that through him, the Bishop, they would have a faithful helper in Kundek. The Bishop's word would seem to have been one of caution as well as of encouragement. Father Ulrich summed up:

1. With St. Ferdinand as center of their activity, the Bishop would assign to them a closed district, to the exclusion of any other

²⁰ St. M. Ll. II, pp. 117-123.

²¹ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 347-349.

²² St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*.

²³ St. M. Ll. II, pp. 128-132.

clergy; where they might live in the same relation to him as they were accustomed to do in Europe in their contracts with the Bishops. Their first work would be to administer to the faithful of that district. Later, as their forces would permit, they might also open an educational institution; but for the time being, their house was, in the interest of asceticism, to be a haven for spiritual exercises and so forth.

2. If there would be persons enough by autumn, they might make preparations to till the ground and put up buildings. Kundek and he would assist. The Bishop's own lawyer would be at their service so that they would not be imposed upon.

3. On account of the singular character of the priest now at Ferdinand, they should put off their explorations until after Easter, when the Bishop would have finished his visitations and Kundek would have returned; then the Bishop would order all things to their satisfaction, and they might in late summer or in autumn begin their work.

4. Meanwhile they might assist here and there.

Father Ulrich failed to see that these promises were not formal agreements but merely expressions of personal good will on the part of the Bishop. Yet this much was sure; the Bishop had received them very graciously, had welcomed their help, and at least informally had given his consent to the establishment of the Benedictine Order in his Diocese. His strong desire to this effect is shown from the fact that upon receipt of their letter from New York he had even telegraphed to the Archbishop of New York to engage the latter's influence that no Bishop in the Province interfere with the Benedictines' coming to Indiana.

Upon their arrival at Vincennes the two pioneers saw why this Diocese was looked down upon elsewhere; but they reacted to this observation in a worthy manner. The fact that they had heard this Diocese—in fact "the despised Indiana"—spoken of disparagingly, prompted Father Ulrich to write to his Abbot that for precisely that reason the Benedictines should settle here.²⁴ He added: "It may be

²⁴ *Ibid.*

that the contempt in which this Diocese is held has influenced me too much in its favor; yet the fact that Indiana is so much to our liking is perhaps a sign from above." When, in a joint letter, dated February 27, 1853,²⁵ the two explorers inquired of their Abbot whether more help might be expected, they added:

Beforehand, we promise a poor and laborious life to all who are willing to join us in this new land that has scarcely sprung into existence. Very many consider Indiana as the land of the poor. Well, the Benedictine, the Father of the poor, would be quite in place here; and if, in the spirit of St. Benedict, we move into the undeveloped solitude and live and work in it as true Benedictines, then, as in a thousand other places in Europe that in bygone ages our Fathers occupied as the most forlorn and dreaded spots, but which under their hands have become places of plenty and of blessing, so also here, in the world across the ocean, the solitude will be transformed into a rich and fruitful land and, as the royal Psalmist sings, "the beautiful places of the wilderness shall grow fat, and the hills shall be girded about with joy, and the vales shall abound with corn."

On the very day after these noble words had been written, the Bishop himself wrote to the Abbot of Einsiedeln:

I am convinced that you will never regret having chosen the State of Indiana for the purpose of founding a monastery of the Order of St. Benedict. In many regards my Diocese can indeed not offer the greater advantages that another could; but yours will be the first religious order in it, and I have not the least doubt of the full success of your religious and that they will be a blessing in a mission district that up till now has had none of the advantages that a well-ordered monastery can offer.²⁶

He concluded with the assurance of the constant paternal benevolence of "the Bishop of Vincennes" toward the contemplated foundation.

There were some, both in Indiana and in Einsiedeln, who did not agree with Father Ulrich as to the advisability of settling in the

²⁵ *Ibid.*, XII, p. 1306.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, II, p. 166. p. 133.

part of Indiana that he had selected, or in Indiana at all, but he answered that the situation should be viewed "with the eye of the future."²⁷

Throughout Lent the Bishop had the two explorers assist partly in ordinary pastoral work and partly in conducting missions.

In a letter to his Abbot, Father Bede wrote of the impression that their coming was making upon a certain class of people at Vincennes.²⁸ At that time the Know-Nothings, spawned by the same devilfish as the Nativists, their forerunners, and as the later American Protective Association, were arousing a gullible public against anything Catholic; priests, nuns, and monks were the chief targets of their malicious activity. "Our presence," Father Bede wrote, "has created a big sensation with the Protestant women. The presence of the 'Monks' makes them shudder, and one is said to have exclaimed: 'Oh, what is going to become of us!' And yet they dare come to my sermons and listen attentively as during this time I treat in English of the marks of the Church; they had thought that I was thoroughly German and that I had horns and goat's feet."

In a letter of March 17, the Abbot restated to Father Ulrich some of the directions given him orally before his departure from Einsiedeln: before committing themselves to making a foundation in Indiana, or in any other state, and still more so in any particular locality thereof, the two explorers were to spend at least one full year in careful observation of the climate, healthful locality, water supply, fertility of the soil, and of the various economic factors that must be taken into consideration when any permanent foundation is contemplated. That the Bishop had shown himself so very gracious, was gratifying; but Bishops with their personal graciousness pass away, whereas for a permanent foundation one should rely only on factors that are permanent. Further, for the time being, this should not be "a big undertaking, but only a moderate, securely established little place . . . Bigger plans would for the present be very dangerous for our monastery because even in America we are closely watched

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, V, pp. 585-593.

and scrutinized by our enemies and so-called friends at home.”²⁹

In his next letter, dated April 1, to Father Ulrich, the Abbot wrote that even a larger tract of land, but in a very suitable locality, might be proposed to the Chapter if the purchase thereof could be effected without going into debt. It was in that letter that the Abbot revealed the mind of Einsiedeln as to why, for the time being, only a dependent mission house was contemplated and not yet a monastery, “for which I promise to lay the foundation stone only with our millenary.”³⁰

On April 1, the two explorers made the formal request to the Bishop that, if he were willing to receive them into his Diocese, he allow them to depart as soon as possible for the place he had in mind for them. The Bishop urged them by no means to leave his Diocese; he would in a short time send them to Ferdinand and would even give them 80 acres of land in that place.³¹

And so it happened that on April 9, 1853, Father Ulrich came to Ferdinand, whereas Father Bede accompanied the Bishop, at his special request, on his missionary journeys to Evansville, St. Wendel, and St. Philip—the district that the Reverend Roman Weinzaepfel, upon hearing of the arrival of the Benedictines, had offered to turn over to them in case a foundation were contemplated in it. From there the Bishop sent Father Bede to Madison to take care of St. Mary’s parish until a secular priest would be available for that position. After that the Bishop released Father Bede to join his confrere at Ferdinand on July 28, not, indeed, to enable them to begin a community life but to have Father Bede take over the care of Fulda, Troy, and Cannelton. Since the log-house rectory at Fulda, ten miles south of Ferdinand, was still under construction, Father Bede resided at Ferdinand, excepting the time he spent in the saddle or at the one or the other of his missions.³²

On Father Ulrich’s arrival at Ferdinand the pastor, the Reverend

²⁹ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 22-23.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

³¹ Diary, pp. 109-110. Actually, St. Meinrad received no such donation.

³² St. M. Ll. II, pp. 158-166.

Hugh Stapf, had a petition circulating among the people that the Bishop should not allow the Benedictines to come to Ferdinand.

The first five weeks at Ferdinand, during which the Rev. Stapf still held forth, were also in other ways unpleasant ones for Father Ulrich, besides his having to pay for his scanty board at the primitive log-cabin rectory.³³

The Bishop had advised the two explorers to buy as much land as possible, so long as it was cheap.³⁴ Accordingly, Father Ulrich had no sooner come to Ferdinand than he explored the neighborhood for land on which the foundation might be made. He found a place to his liking—he called it “simply a paradise”—in Spencer County, in the southern part of the parish of St. Ferdinand, about six miles south of the town; it consisted of a number of tracts situated on the western bank of the Anderson River, a modest contributor to the Ohio River, into which it empties about fourteen miles south.

Fearing that the price of land would rise on account of the rumor started by Kundek even before he left for Europe and but recently confirmed by the Catholic weekly of Cincinnati, the *Wahrheitsfreund*, that the Benedictines were contemplating a foundation in Indiana, Father Ulrich resolved upon “a bold stroke,” to quote his own words; he initiated the purchase of 2400 acres of land, all situated respectively in sections 11, 12, 13, 14, 25, and 26, township 4 south, range 4 west. He reported that, besides fertile soil, there were majestic forests and, underneath the ground, coal, sandstone of excellent quality and, so at least Father Ulrich was made to believe, limestone from which lime could be burnt, and even a little iron. In this tract there were two farms, each with a log house and barns; further, there was a gristmill and a sawmill at the bend of the Anderson just above its confluence with the Hurricane Creek; these mills, too, could be purchased.

Of the two farms, the one that pleased Father Ulrich most was the 160-acre farm of Henry Denning, half of which was cleared. On it there were three springs. The one-storied log house and the

³³ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 414-415.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, V, pp. 585-593 (Fr. Bede to Abbot Henry, March 12, 1853).

farm buildings were of crude backwoods construction. The house stood on the slope of the northeastern spur of a hill, about 45 feet above the Anderson Valley, which it faced. Availing himself of his advantage, the owner was, of course, not willing to sell, and Father Ulrich thought the price, \$2,700, too high.³⁵ Only the year previously, for instance, Denning had bought 20 acres of bottomland of this farm for only \$2.50 an acre.³⁶ Another 80 acres he had bought, in 1842, at \$1.87½ an acre.³⁷ But since Father Ulrich was captivated by the location, he bought this farm in a "gentlemen's agreement," paying down \$1,250 and promising to pay the balance by March 1 of the next year.³⁸

Because of the slowness of correspondence with Einsiedeln—it required nearly two months to get a letter answered, during which time a business situation might change substantially—Father Ulrich could indeed claim some discretionary freedom of action, but only within the determined limits of his commission.

He made the down payment on this and on a number of other purchases with the \$1,108 still at his disposal and with a loan of \$3,890 from the Bishop. The cheaper—though by no means poorer—Congress land and Canal land had to be paid for in full from the start. The whole purchase was to amount to \$10,000—a later itemized statement amounted to \$12,000. Father Kundek later told Father Athanasius that if Father Ulrich had waited until he (Kundek) had returned from Europe, from four to five thousand dollars could have been saved on the purchase of the land.³⁹

In letters dated, respectively, April 23 and May 9, Father Ulrich

³⁵ *Ibid.*, II, p. 140; (Ulrich to the Abbot, April 23, 1853); V, pp. 394-395 (*Beilage*, under the same date).

³⁶ Recorder's Office, Rockport, Record Book 14, p. 379.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Deed Record 7, p. 238.

³⁸ Record Book 16, p. 88—In later years the claim was made that Henry Denning donated one acre of land for a church to be built thereon. But neither the detailed letters to Einsiedeln nor the county recorder's records know of such a donation; all these sources speak of an unencumbered transfer of the whole farm by sale.

³⁹ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 513 (Athanasius to Abbot Henry, Dec. 28, 1855).

reported the accomplished transaction to his Abbot and requested him to establish the required credit either as a loan at interest or as a donation to the new foundation.⁴⁰ He also asked that three more Fathers be sent, and on May 9 he added a request for four or five Lay Brothers and several Oblates.

By letter of June 6, the Abbot kindly yet firmly reproved Father Ulrich for the haste and independent manner in which he had made so large a purchase: his two reports, the one of April 23, the other of May 9, were confused, incomplete, and in part contradictory, wrote the Abbot; he had not complied with the instructions given him that the two explorers must act together, for Father Bede, not even mentioned in the report, did not seem to have been consulted; further, the payment could not be made in the manner suggested by Father Ulrich—the Abbot even had to inform him that he did not know the meaning of some of the financial terms that he had used in his letters. The Abbot next pointed out how Father Ulrich could put the whole affair on the right track and could make out of this "*culpa*" a "*felix culpa*" (a happy fault); he was to make a new and complete report, which should be so worded that it could without hesitation be laid before the Chapter or at least before the Chief Council. The report was to contain a very brief description—or repetition thereof—of their arrival in Indiana, as also of their activity up until then; an enumeration of the reasons why they believed that they could and should recommend Indiana at all as the place of the foundation and of a Benedictine mission house; the common rights that the Bishop of the place intended to grant to the Benedictines for all future time in case they should take over the pastoral care of St. Ferdinand, and also the tenor of the conditions under which the Bishop intended to transfer to them his property together with the parish at that place [Ulrich had reported such an intention]; how Ferdinand was constituted as to size, climate, population, burdens and encumbrances, income, and the like; the quality of the land that might be acquired by additional purchases, and what would once and for all be the

⁴⁰ St. M. Ll. IV, pp. 394-415; Cf. XII, pp. 1326-1330 (Father Jerome Bachmann to the Abbot, Nov. 12, 1853).

definite limit of the necessary financial means to be supplied; what personnel (priests and laity) would be necessary at the two places and how the personnel could be sustained in the future without new subsidies; how a mission house could be founded, in all of which not only they [Fathers Ulrich and Bede] but also others must be taken into consideration, whose needs might be greater or less than theirs; and what they themselves might and would recommend to the Chapter in regard to taking over this obligation and making this purchase. It would be well, the abbot added, if the Bishop would add in writing a word of assurance as to what he intended to grant to the foundation.⁴¹

The Dean of the monastery also wrote to Father Ulrich to admonish him to proceed more cautiously, to be more temperate in his expressions when writing to his superiors, and to be in fraternal harmony with his companion, Father Bede. He likewise stressed fraternal harmony in a letter to Father Bede. As the superior of community life at the monastery, the Dean, who from the two monks' candid letters knew that there had been some friction, could with authority call their attention to the matter.

In answer, both assured their superiors that, as far as the purpose of their mission was concerned, harmony existed between them. Yet several letters to Einsiedeln reveal that repeatedly there was personal friction between them, for which Father Ulrich always blamed Father Bede.

On June 14, the Abbot, following up his letter of June 6, encouraged Father Ulrich to send the desired report as soon as possible; he should take into consideration that the Abbot and his Council were in great anxiety, yet could not take action on the basis of the insufficient reports that had been submitted to them; he felt sure that, if a proper report were forthcoming, the Chapter would decide favorably. The Abbot also indicated his intention of sending reinforcements about the middle of October. And, lastly, he put from two to three thousand francs at Father Ulrich's disposal. "Also in this you

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 29-35.

have a new proof of my paternal good will toward you two; and let us hope to God that He will continue to bless our enterprise and that He will not permit the beautiful work to be wrecked, even though it occasionally meets with trials and dangers."⁴²

A further letter from Father Ulrich, dated May 23—as yet he had not received the Abbot's corrective letters—quieted many of the Abbot's fears. He answered promptly, on June 20, that he no longer doubted that the Chapter would accept the project if an objective and definite report would be submitted to it. In that report Father Ulrich should show that the purchase was made so quickly that the fine property might be secured to the monastery and to the Catholic population; likewise he should show that, if necessary, all could again be disposed of with profit. The Abbot put an additional \$3,000 at Father Ulrich's disposal, though he also cautioned him not to write when excited and not to make exaggerated statements.⁴³

Unfortunately, Father Ulrich failed to appreciate the fatherly kindness coupled with the prudent business attitude that had prompted the Abbot's letter of June 6. After receiving the letter on July 11, he answered testily on the same day that, since the Abbot had not approved of the purchase but had spoken of it as a "*culpa*" out of which now a "*felix culpa*" was to be made, he, Ulrich, did not wish to know anything even of a "*felix culpa*," and he saw no reason why the Abbot should allow this affair to worry him any further. In a reasonable time and with the help of Kundek, who on June 15 had returned from Europe, he would easily be able to sell, even at a profit, all the property acquired.⁴⁴ (Actually, he would very likely have had an unpleasant experience, had he tried to sell.)

A week later, Father Ulrich received the Abbot's still more reassuring letters of June 14 and 20. In his reply of July 31, Father Ulrich declared his readiness again to further the securing of the property concerned. To the Dean he wrote with self-complacent

⁴² *Ibid.*, II, pp. 35-37.

⁴³ Fr. Ulrich's letter, *ibid.*, IV, pp. 404-408; the Abbot's letter, II, pp. 137-138.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 415-417.

satisfaction that, without any effort on his part, the Abbot had changed his mind and was coming to see things as he, Father Ulrich, had first recommended them.

Father Bede joined Father Ulrich on July 28. After viewing the tract of land in question, on July 31 Father Bede also gladly signed the detailed report demanded by the Abbot and composed in Latin, evidently by Father Ulrich. As a postscript, Father Bede added a special note of praise that his confrere had chosen that tract of land; he too recommended it to the Abbot and the Chapter for favorable action.⁴⁵

In a short note, dated August 16, Father Ulrich informed the Abbot that he had sent the formal report asked for, not without expressing resentment that his and Father Bede's simple word was not considered sufficient. He added that he had had no time to make a copy of the documents that the Abbot had said should accompany the report. Thereafter, Father Ulrich no longer wrote to his superiors, even though the Abbot once wrote to him. Only on August 26 of the next year, at Father Bede's request that in view of Father Ulrich's disposition the Abbot write again—which the latter did—only then did Father Ulrich answer, though, in his wonted manner, as the offended man.⁴⁶

Kundek, too, in his own style wrote to the Abbot in terms of high praise of the land selected. He, of course, besides being interested in the foundation as such, was also personally concerned in having it within his large mission district. So far as the Bishop was concerned, Kundek continued, he would prefer to have twenty Fathers today and fifty tomorrow. Kundek also quoted his own words about this foundation, words which had been spoken in church to the congregation at Ferdinand: "The Pope wills it; Cardinal Frasoni, the Prefect of the Propaganda, wills it; the Most Reverend Bishop wills it; the Reverend Father Ulrich wills it; and I will it,

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 420-423.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, V, pp. 657-661 (Bede to the Dean); IV, pp. 430-432 (Ulrich to the Abbot).

and with me the heart of this whole congregation. Hence it is also the will of God, and I am convinced that the providence which until now has directed the whole affair will also perfect it to the honor of St. Benedict and the salvation of souls."⁴⁷

The Bishop wrote to the Abbot that Father Ulrich had informed him that orders had come again to dispose of the property, and that he had advanced Father Ulrich the money for its purchase lest the neighbors buy the land and then resell it at a high price. The place was healthful and advantageous, and one ought not hastily sell it again. It was far removed from the influence of cities and was surrounded by a Catholic population. In view of the scarcity of priests and the excellent opportunity here of accomplishing much good, he would be very sorry to see the enterprise given up.⁴⁸

This put the Abbot into the embarrassing position of having to explain to the Bishop the course of events: he had not ordered to resell; he had merely reproved Father Ulrich for the manner of his procedure and had ordered him to give a detailed and orderly account on the basis of which the Abbot and the Chapter might form a considered judgment; Father Ulrich had answered this request with the announcement that, his work having been repudiated, he would now proceed to sell the property. And yet the Abbot did what under the circumstances he could to shield Father Ulrich by assuring the Bishop that Father Ulrich had the best of intentions for the mission as well as for the monastery, but that he did not consider sufficiently what the monastery could do under the present conditions; the Abbot pointed out that Einsiedeln had to take care of schools and parishes, and of some 150,000 pilgrims annually. Nevertheless, he, the Abbot, was about to send two more Fathers, namely Jerome Bachmann, who was made the superior, and Eugene Schwerzmann; also some lay help.⁴⁹

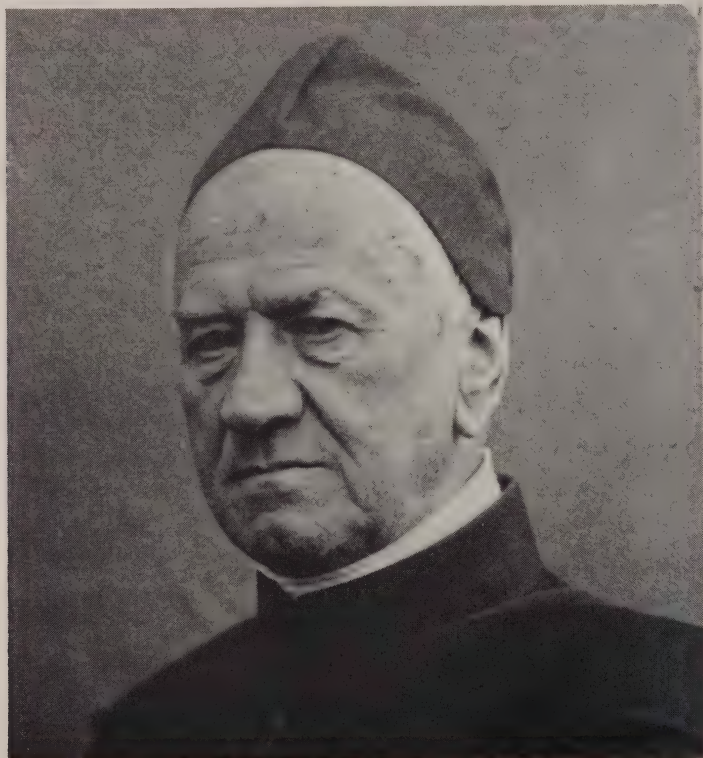
Father Eugene, a member of Engelberg Abbey, Switzerland, had spent some time at Einsiedeln as a professor of Theology. With the consent of his own Abbot he had expressed the desire to devote him-

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 6-6b.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 173.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 174-176.

self to the new mission foundation. Father Jerome, 56 years of age, had been a professor, had taken part in pastoral work, and, since 1846, had held the important offices of Subprior and *Statthalter* (Administrator, Oeconomus) at Einsiedeln.⁵⁰



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Father Jerome and the four lay companions, Sales Kälin, Joseph Thomas Kälin, Marie Schätti, and Gertrude Kälin—the latter two were to serve as housekeepers—arrived at Ferdinand on October 28, 1853; Father Eugene was detained temporarily at Cincinnati to trace the luggage that had become lost through the fault of an agent.⁵¹

After Father Eugene had located the luggage, he took a boat from Cincinnati to Troy, Indiana, where he arrived the evening of

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, XII, p. 1319.

⁵¹ Henggeler, 1. c. Number 536.

November 4. The next day he mounted a horse and headed into the woods toward Ferdinand, 18 miles to the north. "On the way there," so he later wrote to the Abbot of Einsiedeln, "I met a rather neatly dressed young man, who from underneath his hat cast sharp looks at me. I wonder what his design is, I thought; and behold, as he drew up alongside my horse, it was—imagine my joy—dear Father Bede. I nearly tumbled off my horse rather than dismounted. But the words of welcome were few; both of us were overcome by our joyful emotion. Bede then went to Fulda and I on to Ferdinand."

Father Jerome, accompanied by one or the other of the Fathers, had with a couple of experienced men inspected the property several times. On November 12, in a report to the Abbot, he fully approved of Father Ulrich's choice. This report was signed by all four. But to the dismay of the Abbot, Father Jerome found that a loan of \$12,000 more was needed to secure the whole tract. The missionaries promised to pay four to five per cent interest on this loan and to pay, on the principal, \$1,000 after the first two years and \$1,000 each year thereafter; meanwhile the property would be mortgaged to Einsiedeln. No bank in Indiana would grant a loan for longer than ninety days and then only at six to eight per cent interest. Father Jerome also stressed the spiritual need, work, and harvest of the district that the Bishop had turned over to them under "his seal and signature."⁵²

Upon receipt of this letter, the Abbot put an additional \$4,000 at Father Jerome's disposal. This sum he had secretly on deposit up until then as an emergency fund with which he hoped pleasantly to surprise the next Abbot of Einsiedeln. He would make any sacrifice in behalf of the new foundation.⁵³ The monastery at Einsiedeln had now devoted 94,736 francs to this undertaking.

By a letter of January 5, 1854, which reached Father Jerome on

⁵² St. M. Ll. XII, pp. 1326-1330; cf. Fr. Jerome's letter to the Dean of Eins. pp. 1330-1333.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 40-42. 42-43. The Abbot's letter to Father Jerome was dated January 5.

February 13, Abbot Henry designated the mission foundation as a [dependent] Priory and Father Jerome its Prior.⁵⁴

All four Fathers were kept occupied by the pastoral work in the district. In addition to that, Father Eugene for the time being functioned also as a grade school teacher at Ferdinand, for no other teacher was available. Yet Father Jerome did not lose sight of the fact that his main duty was to attend to the many details of securing the property, of moving onto the Denning farm (the title of which was transferred only on February 21, 1854, after full payment had been made),⁵⁵ and of beginning a religious community life. This was uppermost in his mind, especially after the Abbot's letter containing the anxiously awaited assurance of the necessary financial help had reached him on January 31, 1854.⁵⁶

The occupation of the new monastic home was delayed a week by continuous storms and rains. But on March 13, a unique caravan wound its way along the bumpy, muddy backwoods road from Ferdinand to the new foundation: two wagons, loaded with simple furniture and various household utensils, followed on foot by Brother Candidate Louis Neubauer, an Alsatian, who had arrived on February 1, Oblate Sales Kälin, and Joseph Kälin, ready to pick up whatever pieces might be jolted off the wagons or be brushed off by the low-reaching limbs of trees; Father Jerome and Gertrude Kälin, the housekeeper, followed, each mounted on a horse. At the Denning farm they were met by the former proprietor and his family, who then took their leave. The Fathers officially named the place, as Abbot Henry himself had ordered, St. Meinrad.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Abbot Henry to Fr. Jerome, Jan. 5, 1854. Archives, St. Meinrad Archabbey, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*.

⁵⁵ Recorder's Office. Record Book 14, p. 379.

⁵⁶ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1350.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, II, p. 44; XII, p. 1365. Official invitation of Prior Jerome to Bishop de St. Palais to attend the dedication of what was to be called "*Monasterium B. M. V. ad St. Meinradum*"; *Journal*, p. 5 (March 13). This is the *Journal* that Father Jerome started for the new foundation. (Archives, St. Meinrad Archabbey.)

Father Eugene, who came from his mission at Fulda, at once busied himself with erecting an altar in the small room, 9 ft. by 12, at the south end of the porch, the room which had also to serve as a bedroom for the two resident Fathers. It was in this room that, on March 14, 1854, the sacrifice of the Mass was offered for the first time at St. Meinrad, "to the Lord God, in honor of the Blessed Mother of God, and of St. Meinrad." This combination of chapel and bedroom was the "Priory." (In the summer of that year, Father Jerome indeed ordered Sales, an unskilled carpenter, to build a small frame chapel off the southeast corner of the house; but there is no record to show that Sales finished that chapel.) On the day following the first Mass at St. Meinrad, Father Jerome wrote to Einsiedeln; "*Domine, bonum est nos hic esse* (Lord, it is good for us to be here); "let us set up three tents here, one for Thee, one for Mary, and one for St. Meinrad."⁵⁸

To gratify the desire of the people as well as the wish of Father Kundek and of the Bishop that there be a more solemn dedication, the feast of St. Benedict, on March 21, was chosen for the event. Kundek had volunteered to preach. At seven o'clock in the morning, Fathers Jerome, Ulrich, and Bede chanted in the church of St. Ferdinand the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* and Father Neuber, from Celestine, celebrated a High Mass in honor of the Holy Ghost. Then a procession to St. Meinrad set out. It was headed by a wagon with the processional cross, a banner, and the Mass servers; there followed a gaily colored cavalcade of "lancers," fifty strong, each man having a little flag fluttering from the shaft of his lance; next came another bedecked wagon, surmounted by a bell which with its yoke and carriage weighed 421 pounds and bore the inscription *Sancta Maria et Sancte Meinrade orate pro nobis* ("Holy Mary and St. Meinrad, pray for us"), and which was surrounded by some twenty little girls dressed in white; the four oxen drawing this wagon were neatly decorated with wreaths. A third wagon carried the clergy, namely

⁵⁸ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1370 (Father Eugene to the Abbot, March 25, 1854); *Journal*, pp. 6-7.

Kundek, Neuber, and the three Benedictines, Jerome, Ulrich, and Bede. Illness prevented the Bishop from attending. The rear was formed by another uniformed cavalcade, Father Kundek's Guards, from Jasper, followed by a great number of other people in carriages, on wagons, and on foot. In the course of the six miles the procession passed underneath three triumphal arches of foliage that neighboring farmers had erected. Though it rained heavily all day long and the people could take no shelter, about 1,500—some of whom were mothers with infants in their arms—took part in the historic celebration of the founding of St. Meinrad's Abbey.

When the procession had arrived at St. Meinrad, where Father Eugene officially met it, Father Kundek, the Vicar General, solemnly blessed the house and the bell. Thereupon Father Prior Jerome celebrated the Solemn High Mass on an altar erected on the roofed veranda facing the Anderson Valley. Music was furnished partly by the Jasper brass band and partly by the Ferdinand choir. The celebrant's voice repeatedly was choked with tears of emotion. On account of the rain, he intended to dispense with the solemn *Te Deum* and to close the liturgical function with Benediction. But then Kundek arose to speak "just a few more words," so he announced, about the significance and the importance of the celebration. He spoke with his customary forceful vivacity. But when after an hour, Kundek had not yet spoken the last of the few words, Father Neuber gravely put his watch where Kundek could see it. It was half past two. The speaker took the hint and impressively concluded with five Our Fathers to implore God's blessing upon the new "monastery."⁵⁹

⁵⁹ The following legends surrounding the founding of St. Meinrad Archabbey deserve recording; they have lasted up until now. They are first mentioned in Father Jerome's letter to the Abbot, dated April 15, 1854 (St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1374): "Remarkable, pious legends are circulated about our new home. Several Catholic Germans and Protestant Americans claim to have heard more than a year ago the sound of a bell coming from the place from which one now resounds through the distant woods, daily inviting the people to the holy sacrifice of the Mass. When toward the end of February, I told Mrs. Denning at Ferdinand that a bell would be at her place, she brought the news home with joy, and her daughter [Mary] said in great astonishment:

'Ah, mother! How glad I am that my dream that I had last night is to come true. I dreamed I pulled a bell out of the creek down there [the Anderson], carried it home and hung it alongside the house, between the big rosebush and the garden, on the same place where my sister [Catherine] in dreams several years ago saw so many times a white cloth spread out, over which an altar was erected and Mass was being said.' Still more remarkable it is," Father Jerome continued, "that I, without having known anything about that dream, had the bell, which, including its frame of enclosed design weighs 421 pounds, mounted on a scaffold 6 feet square and 10 feet high on that very spot between the rosebush and the garden..."

As to the settlers' hearing a bell in this neighborhood, one might remark that even now, especially in winter, one can under very favorable atmospheric conditions faintly hear at St. Meinrad the bells of Ferdinand over an airline distance of five miles. But in those days Ferdinand had only two small bells. In case these were ever heard over that distance, then, when a bell was actually installed at St. Meinrad, the settlers might have connected the memory of that faint and haunting sound through the woods with the sound of the bell then in their midst. That may seem to be a farfetched explanation, but it is not an impossible one.

As to the dreams of the two young women—granted their genuineness, their precedence to the opening of negotiations for the sale of the property, and their presage of the future—that is a problem either for the parapsychologist or for the theologian.

Father Bede wrote two extensive mission reports to Abbot Henry. The first is dated January, 1865; the second, October, 1865 (St. M. Ll. Vol XIII, pp. 1475-1496).

In the first report (p. 1479), Father Bede mentioned the loud and harmonious ringing of bells that settlers, Catholics and Protestants, were said to have heard repeatedly coming from the Denning home even before *Einsiedeln* thought of making a foundation in Indiana. When they told Denning about hearing bells from his farm, he said that he had no bells except, perhaps, a cow-bell. When, later, the two Denning girls claimed that they heard fine music coming from the house when they were working in the fields some distance away from it and wondered what musicians had arrived, their parents made light of what they called "day dreams and ringing in the ears," an explanation that the girls rejected.

In the second report (p. 1493), Father Bede, having mentioned the same stories, stated that to his personal knowledge both girls were very trustworthy and certainly would knowingly never have told a lie. About Catherine, who on August 6, 1850, had entered the convent of the Sisters of Providence at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, he wrote: "Of the latter, her relatives tell that when it was her turn to watch the house when the rest went to Ferdinand or to Fulda to attend divine services, she repeatedly very clearly saw below her window alongside the rosebush, an altar, at it an officiating priest, and just as definite-

ly heard the little Mass-bell at the Sanctus, at the Consecration, and at the Communion. All this, I repeat, was being told before anyone in that region could have any idea of our mission plan and of our settling in that place. It is quite by chance and was determined purely by local conditions that the main altar of our church is over the very spot where the rosebush was and where the maiden apparently saw the officiating priest. I myself have never spoken to her about this talk of the people, although in Terre Haute, my parish, where she lives in the convent, I should often enough have had opportunity to do so. In her presence I did not want to attach so much importance to the affair as to question her about it. As to the rest, this person is known to me as possessed of an exceedingly delicate conscience and as being candidness and truthfulness itself."

H. Alerding, in *A History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Vincennes*, 1883 (page 548), writes that Catherine, "very pious and virtuous, saw a white cloth spread on the ground bought afterwards [for the foundation of the monastery], and on it an altar. She heard repeatedly, both day and night, the voices of persons singing psalms and sacred canticles. Providence seems to have selected the spot where the monastery was to be."

Mrs. Edward Becher, a niece of the Catherine Denning in question, more than once has stated to the present writer that her father, Henry Denning, Jr., the brother of Catherine, often told his children that Catherine was very good and prayerful and that she used to go further up along the hillside, to the place where the main entrance to the present monastery is, kneel on a rock, and pray, especially in the evening. When she told her mother that there she had heard voices singing, and had seen something white, like light, and had seen two white doves flying up, her mother told her not to tell anybody about it, because people might think she was losing her mind. When Catherine told her father that she wanted to become a nun, he refused to give his consent; he even took her prayerbook from her and forbade her to go any more to that place to pray. It needed a serious admonition on the part of the pastor to draw from the father the reluctant consent that his daughter, born on August 28, 1829, should depart for the Convent, on August 6, 1850.

Catherine made her religious profession as Sister St. Ange [Angela] on August 15, 1853. When giving her this name, the Servant of God, Mother Theodore Guérin, remarked: "We call her an angel, but she will belong to the highest choir." Later, when Sister St. Ange was on a mission, Mother Theodore wrote to another Sister: "All that you tell me concerning our dear Sister is very consoling. Oh, that there were many a St. Ange amongst us! We can all learn beautiful lessons from her humble simplicity and devotedness; but her example shines forth most resplendently in holy obedience." (*Life and Works of Mother Guérin*, by a member of the Congregation. 1904. Pp. 403-404.) Sister St. Ange died on July 15, 1870.

Despite Father Bede's reserve, one might wish that someone had procured an authoritative statement from Sister St. Ange concerning these experiences attributed to her.

CHAPTER IV

THE MISSION HOUSE PRIORY

WHEN, IN 1853, Father Jerome departed from Einsiedeln to go to the new foundation, Abbot Henry both by word of mouth and by written *Instructions for the Superior of the Mission House to be Founded*, and by *Statutes for the American Mission House*, again defined its canonical status and its organization. His reapproval of these Statutes, minus the section concerning Oblate Brothers, on April 20, 1855, and his *Special Commissions for St. Meinrad*, in May, 1855, restated the same stipulations.¹

Section one determined the canonical status of the foundation: it was to be a Daughter House of the monastery at Einsiedeln, in all things a dependency of the Mother House; under obedience to the cloistral Prior, appointed by the Abbot of Einsiedeln, all should co-operate in fraternal unity and charity to make the Mission House in due time self-supporting; the necessary steps toward the accomplishment of this purpose and all orders, except those of a purely administrative nature, were to be arrived at by common consultation of all the members of the house and were to be submitted to the superior of the Mother House for sanction; all were to observe

¹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot to Ulrich, Sept. 9, 1853); St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1542-1544 (*Instruktionen fuer den Superior des zu gruendenden Missionshauses in Amerika*); pp. 1539-1541 (*Statuten fuer das amerikanische Missionshaus*); the same *Statuten*, re-approved, April 20, 1855, St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, file 8, folder 1; St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1846-1847 (*Specielle Auftraege nach St. Meinrad im Mai, 1855*).

strict secrecy as to the official transactions of the undertaking, and correspondence about its business affairs was to be carried on only with the superior of the Mother House; in private correspondence everything was to be avoided with loving care that might become detrimental to the undertaking.

In the second section the rights and duties of the superior were determined: at the Daughter House he was to take the place of the Abbot; he was to direct and supervise it in things spiritual and material and was to take care that the commands of the Abbot were observed accurately; he was to manifest equal love and care of all; he was to make all the appointments, assign work to each one and supervise the official activities of each one; he was personally to provide the house and its dependencies—"*Exposituren*"—with the necessary domestics and laborers and was to enter with them into such written agreements that they could never become a burden to the Institute if for any reason they were dismissed; he was to keep the accounts and the treasury for the whole administration, and to demand an account from every official entrusted with a part of it; and, at the end of the year, he was to give, besides the main account of the standing of the Institute, an account of the whole administration; and it was to be his special task to watch that nothing was ever undertaken or granted that could be to the detriment of either the Daughter House or the Mother House.

The third section contained the special duties of the other members of the Mission House: They were to exhibit love and reverence toward their superior, to support him with all their strength, and were to consider it a duty to call his attention to whatever might advance or injure the prosperity of the house. Without the consent of the superior, nobody might leave his mission district, take boarders or servants into the house, or enter into a separate engagement with anyone for whatever purpose; likewise each one was strictly forbidden, without the express permission of the Abbot, to send to Europe invitations urging emigration to America or in any way whatsoever to cause anyone to emigrate. No one might keep money for his arbitrary use; all savings and earnings of any sort whatsoever

were to be handled by the superior. Recourse to the Abbot was open to everyone, and in that case everyone could also be cited by the Abbot for adjudication.

The fourth section regulated the reception of Lay Brothers, but only as Oblates: after an indefinite period of strict probation one might with the permission of the Abbot of Einsiedeln be admitted to the Novitiate and, after that, to the Oath of Fidelity and Obedience together with the Simple Vows of a religious, whereupon he was under canonical obligation to remain in the community as one devoted to manual work, nor could the superior of the house dismiss him except for canonical reasons. Though by such vows he did not become a member of the monastery at Einsiedeln, hence did not acquire a title of support from it, he was admitted into a spiritual union with it. He also had to sign a statement waiving any claim or demand upon St. Meinrad in case he would ever, either during the time of probation or thereafter, leave the community or be dismissed from it. Finally, the right was reserved to the superior of the Mother House at all times and at his discretion to change, add to, or revoke these regulations.

The provision of these statutes for the admission of Lay Brothers as Oblates to Simple Vows of religious was quite remarkable from the standpoint of Canon Law; it must be understood strictly in keeping with the ecclesiastical law in use in those days. Inasmuch as St. Meinrad was not yet established as an Independent Priory, it could neither have an independent canonical novitiate nor admit anyone to the canonical profession of religious vows. The Abbot had made these provisions for Brother Oblates in the conviction that St. Meinrad would soon be self-supporting. Later, when he doubted the likelihood of such an accomplishment, he became even more cautious. In these statutes as reapproved on April 20, 1855, the section dealing with the admission of Brother Oblates was omitted. In May, the Abbot, distinguishing between admission into the Novitiate and into the Order, wrote that, whereas the stipulations under which one might be admitted into the Novitiate had already been established, those for the reception into the Order were first to be drawn up at

St. Meinrad and sent to Einsiedeln for sanction.² That was done in 1856.³ In this revised section of the statutes there was added to the conditions for admission to the vows stipulated in the Statutes of 1853 the proviso that the vows and the title to sustenance were to cease if the Mission House did not continue to exist. But since under such a proviso nobody could have been promoted to higher orders, a special clause was added for an aspirant to the priesthood:

Be it further agreed that in case higher Orders should later be conferred upon the one received, that can be done only *sub titulo missionis*, the Most Reverend diocesan Bishop consenting, and under the condition that, in case the one so ordained would be dismissed by the superior of the house, or the house would cease to exist, he [the one dismissed] would not be allowed to say Mass and perform other public priestly functions until he would receive from the Bishop the permission required and be provided with a sufficient patrimony according to the prescriptions of Canon Law.⁴

Father Athanasius added that from several statements the Bishop had made, he had arrived at the conclusion that the Bishop would ordain under this arrangement. When, in 1859, the continuance of St. Meinrad was very doubtful, the Abbot cautioned even more definitely against admitting any Brother Oblate to the Profession of Vows, on account of the repercussion that Einsiedeln might experience from the Swiss Government if St. Meinrad failed, though meanwhile applicants might be received and might continue as Novices.⁵

² St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1546-1547 (*Specielle Auftraege nach St. Meinrad im May, 1855*).

³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (Letter to Fr. Chrysostom, Jan. 27, 1857).

⁴ St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1546-1547 (*Specielle Auftraege nach St. Meinrad im May, 1855*); cf. p. 1554; *ibid.* p. 1551 (*Formular fuer die Aufnahme von Oblaten in das Missionshaus St. Meinrad im Staate Indiana, Uebereinkunft*); p. 1552 (*Formular fuer den Aufnahmevertrag von Klerikern, der vor der Profess angefertigt werden soll*).

⁵ St. M. Ll. IV, pp. 557-559 (Athanasius to Ulrich, March 15, 1859).

The building into which they had moved was crudely constructed of unsquared logs; it had neither locks nor screens. This last want was felt especially in summer: when the windows were kept closed, the heat became stifling; when they were opened, the flies, the mosquitoes, and a multitude of other insects swarmed in



ST. MEINRAD PRIORY, 1854

Previous to construction of lean-to. Photograph of miniature log house constructed to scale according to description and pencil sketches by Father Eugene Schwerzmann, O.S.B.

from the still swampy Anderson Valley and the nearby primeval forest to reinforce the army of more domestic insects. In winter the cold came up through the cracks of the board floor and made feet uncomfortably cold; the floor, close to the ground, absorbed moisture from underneath, so that shoes allowed to stand on the floor

three days were mouldy.⁶ Summer and winter the roof allowed free access to air and water. During rain at night, the Prior and his roommate kept themselves dry in their beds by holding umbrellas over themselves, and one of them sang cheerily: "*Unter meinem Dache leb ich froh und still*" (" 'neath my roof so humble, life is joy and peace"). Father Jerome wrote to a friend: "Though far removed from all human society, we live here joyfully and contentedly and we should not like to be closer to a tumultuous city." And Father Eugene wrote: "But all beginnings are difficult, and I tell you that I am well satisfied with our dear poverty."⁷

There were only two rooms in the house: the smaller one, as previously mentioned, at first had to serve both as a chapel and as a bedroom for the two Fathers; the larger one, 20 ft. by 24, was kitchen, dining room, general store and utility room. Narrow stairs led up to the garret; there the Brother Candidates and the workmen slept. By the middle of April, Sales had constructed a three-room lean-to on the west side of the house and had divided the main room into two, one of which remained the kitchen and dining room, while the other was made a private room for the housekeeper. Later also the northern end of the porch was by means of boards made into a room.⁸

Early in the summer of that first year, it seems in June, Sales also constructed a primitive little frame church. This stood south, slightly east, between the log cabin and what was to be the new monastery.⁹

Before long the heat of summer became very intense, rising to 98°; on account of the great humidity it became all the more oppressive to one accustomed to the temperate climate of Switzerland or of Germany. With the coming of summer the heat was felt greatly in the low, crowded house, especially during the meals, all the

⁶ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 509 (Athanasius to Abbot Henry, July 24, 1855).

⁷ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1373; X, p. 1128..

⁸ St. M. Ll. XII p. 1372 (Eugene to the Abbot, March 25, 1854); p. 1380 (Jerome to the Dean, May 22, 1854).

⁹ *Ibid.*, XII, p. 1380 (Jerome to the Dean, May 22, 1854), cf. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 450.

more since the partitioning of the main room made it necessary to eat in the kitchen, in which the table had to be placed near the hearth. During the summer of 1854, the meals could be taken under the open porch; but in 1855, after the porch had been made into another room, the table was set outside in the shade, weather permitting.¹⁰

The meals themselves were frugal: "In the morning, a bad coffee; at noon and in the evening, soup, pork, and a vegetable, at times poultry and a glass of wine."¹¹ In those days, the ordinary bread was cornbread.

Spring had arrived, and the field work had to be done. With the scant personnel at his disposal, Father Jerome could, as a modest beginning of agricultural development, undertake to cultivate only a small part of the 2400 acres; he therefore set about cultivating sections of what had been the Denning and the Thiemann farms; three other farms he rented out to settlers. It had been agreed upon at the time of purchase that Denning should harvest that year's crop of wheat—since he had sown it the previous autumn—and should keep two-thirds of it for himself and deliver the other third to the new owners of the field.¹²

Since the fields were mostly but recently cleared forests, plowing had to be done over and through roots and around stumps of trees. Work in the fields met with hazards also from snakes, among which, not to mention formidable-looking blacksnakes, chicken snakes, garter snakes, and water snakes, there were deadly spreading vipers, copperheads, and rattlesnakes.

One day Joseph, a Denning boy, was cradling wheat where now the Minor Seminary stands. Because of the swish of the scythe and the rustling of the falling wheat, he did not hear the warning whirr of a rattlesnake; he became aware of it only when he injured the snake and it darted toward him. He made for the nearby rail fence, pursued by the infuriated reptile. Later he found its tail, that he had cut off; it had eighteen rattles.

¹⁰ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 371.

¹¹ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1329.

¹² *Journal*, April 9, 1854, p. 9.

The following two incidents will illustrate some of the vicissitudes and medical treatments of those days. When one of the Thiemann family—they were closely related to the Dennings—had been bitten by a poisonous snake, they buried the man up to his waist in ground and made him drink all the whiskey he could take; whereupon someone mounted a horse and hastened to Jasper, a distance of about 17 miles, to summon a physician. The physician, who came quickly to minister to the stricken man, assured them that the treatment had saved the man's life. At another time, Henry Thiemann had been kicked on the head by a mule. To break the violent delirium into which the man had fallen, the physician directed that a hole be bored in the low board ceiling so that water from a perforated container placed above the board might drip upon the man's head. After a night of this treatment the patient fell asleep. Later he developed insanity. One might hesitate to say whether this was due to the kick of the mule or to the steady dripping of the water.¹³

Hogs were usually let run free to forage in the woods. They were supposed to be deadly enemies of snakes. But Father Athanasius, who came in 1855, was of a scientific bent of mind. He tested the popular belief about hogs by throwing to the hogs "a large snake"—it would seem to have been a blacksnake—that had been wounded. "At once they all rushed toward it but did not devour it, and I do not know whether they do that only when attacked by the snakes or whether this is true only of the rattlesnakes"—the rattling possibly irritating the hogs.¹⁴ These hogs would become quite wild, even ferocious, especially if a dog barked at them. Joseph Denning, working in the field where the monastery now stands, one time had to save

¹³ These three incidents are recorded from the oral narrative of Mrs. Edward Becher, a daughter of Gerhard Henry Denning, the older son of Henry Denning from whom Father Ulrich bought the farm. She was born on November 13, 1870. Her father would often tell his children about the hardships surrounding life in the early days of St. Meinrad. A similar treatment in those days against snake bite is recorded in the *Indiana Magazine of History*, vol. 34 (1938), pp. 447-450.

¹⁴ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 524.

himself from charging hogs by climbing to the top of the roots of an uprooted tree.

By April 15, 1854, 150 apple trees and more than 1000 grapevine cuttings had been planted. By the end of May, the stables and the yard were stocked with two horses, a foal, a team of oxen, a cow and a calf, a ewe with a young one, two young sheep, twenty chickens, four geese, one beehive, a solitary dove that had found St. Meinrad congenial to its quiet contemplation, one dog, and one cat.¹⁵

Agriculturally, the first year of the new foundation was a disappointment to the high hopes that the pioneers had entertained. Their optimism had led them to ask Einsiedeln to contribute, or to advance as a loan, considerable sums of money for what Einsiedeln, judging according to Swiss standards, considered an extravagant purchase. However, that year could not be taken as an index of the agricultural value of St. Meinrad because during the same year a disastrous drought prevailed throughout the middle states. Old Yankee settlers said that not for forty years had there been so little snow as in the preceding winter, and so little rain as in that summer; neither had the heat ever persisted so continuously. During three months it rained only three times, in all scarcely five hours, according to Father Jerome's recording. As a result, the harvest in fields and orchards was scant. After the first mowing, the meadows were burned out by the heat, and so were the pastures.¹⁶

The drought was especially hard on the Yankee farmers, who had not yet learned to store up hay in the barns and who in autumn and winter kept their cattle outdoors to forage as best they could. As a consequence many of their cattle perished for lack of food, or were butchered to forestall their dying of hunger.

One winter day a monastery team was pulling a wagon on which there were wood shavings. A team of famished and very emaciated oxen, driven by a Yankee farmer, came up behind the monastery

¹⁵ St. M. Ll. XII, pp. 1374; 1375; 1384.

¹⁶ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1401. (Fr. Jerome to Abbot Henry, Sept. 25, 1854); *ibid.*, p. 1410 (Fr. Chrysostom Foffa, Report to the *Ludw. Missions Verein*).

wagon. When the oxen caught sight of the wood shavings, they, "as though possessed," made a dash for the monastery wagon "and devoured the shavings as though they were fresh clover. In consequence of the dry summer of the past year the Yankee suffered no less than his stock. One need not be surprised at this, since he preserves only as much of his fruits as will hardly suffice until the next harvest and works daily only about two to four hours. The German suffers much less from such a scarcity"—by reason of his industrious foresight.¹⁷

Though the little community suffered no direct want during that hard first year, it was affected indirectly by the high prices of the time, and by not being able to pay anything on the debt.

A certain Jason Adye owned a grist- and sawmill just above the confluence of Hurricane Creek with the Anderson River; the place was inside the sharp northward curve of the Anderson River. The mills were run by water power, and so the milldam had to be beyond this confluence because up to that point the Anderson was as it still is—by law "a navigable river." Fathers Ulrich and Bede were convinced that in the possession of the Mission House these two mills would be a steady source of income. After some time, Father Jerome, too, became persuaded of the possible profit of the project and, on March 16, 1854, purchased the whole outfit together with 166 acres of land for \$2,800. This land, which lies along both banks of the Anderson, was favorably located inasmuch as it touched the northern limits of land already in possession of the Mission House.¹⁸ After that the establishment became known among the Yankees as the "Priest Mill."¹⁹ To the Catholics it was "*Die Klostermuehle*."

With this purchase, St. Meinrad took over Jason Adye's troubles. The works soon showed one defect after another, necessitating ex-

¹⁷ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 507 (Fr. Jerome to Abbot Henry, July 24, 1855).

¹⁸ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1370. (Jerome to Abbot Henry, March 15, 1854); *ibid.*, pp. 1413-1415 (Report of Fr. Chrysostom Foffa, O.S.B., to *Ludwig Missions Verein*, Dec. 5, 1855).

¹⁹ *History of Warrick, Spencer, and Perry Counties, Indiana*. Chicago. Goodspeed Bros. & Co., Publishers, 1885, p. 768.

pensive repairs; these, together with the wages paid to hired hands, ate up the proceeds, though the *Journal* reveals an occasional trickle of income. Father Eugene, besides being pastor at Fulda and the only teacher in the monastic school, was the first manager of the mills. When the water threatened to become too low to supply the millrace toward the end of that dry summer, a steam engine was installed, in September, at an expense of \$1,350. This was to make it possible to run both the gristmill and the sawmill throughout the year.²⁰

Work at both mills was going fairly well when, at half past one in the afternoon of April 23, 1855, fire broke out in the main living house at the mills and soon consumed it. The conflagration also destroyed Adye's former country store, which had been turned into a living house, the smithy, and the chicken house; not even the two new and costly transmission belts, that had been stored in the main living house, could be saved. Exceptional summer heat had made the frame buildings very dry, and a strong west wind whipped the flames from one building to another; even the fence burned down to a distance of 300 feet. Fortunately, the wind blew the flames into the direction opposite the mill works, for otherwise these, too, would have been destroyed, particularly since many logs and much lumber were stacked between the houses and the mills. Two of the Brothers worked heroically to keep the flames from spreading; yet the damage amounted to about \$1,500.

The two Brothers could not account for the fire and its sudden spread before it was detected; they had used merely a little kindling to cook two eggs for their noonday lunch. They had but shortly returned to the sawmill when the house was all ablaze. Father Bede, who at that time was managing the mills, suspected arson. He thought the fire may have been started by a man whom Father Ulrich

²⁰ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1386; IV, pp. 506-512; V. p. 569; *Journal*, Aug. 31, 1854.

²¹ *Journal*, Apr. 23, 1855, pp. 34-36; St. M. Ll. IV, pp. 504-505 (Athanasius to Abbot Henry, June 7, 1855). Fr. Jerome, after his return from Europe, surmised that the fire might be attributed to the low and somewhat defective chimney. *Ibid.*, V, p. 574.

formerly had greatly favored as an employee. The man had worked in the brickyard that Father Kundek had allowed the Fathers to start and operate on his property at Ferdinand, but Father Ulrich subsequently had discharged him as incompetent. The fellow had brought suit in court against Father Ulrich, but had lost; whereupon he was reported to have threatened that he would do more than \$1,000 damage to the Fathers. Father Bede had given the man and his family lodging at one of the houses at the mills, from which, so he had declared, he would not move out until he had been paid as much as he claimed for his work in the brickyard; yet at the time of the fire all his belongings had been readied for quick removal. Thereafter he was going about rather studiously unconcerned, quite contrary to his usual manner. When the alarm was given, the man was in the smithy; but it was his son, a crafty lad who first raised the cry of fire, whom Father Bede suspected as the actual arsonist.

After several men had unsuccessfully tried to repair the old mill works, Father Ulrich warmly recommended that one George Wolf be employed to do the work. Wolf, of assuring manners, with a goatee over which a well-twisted mustache stood guard, presented himself as an engineer specializing in mills. With much ado he worked around for half a year, manifesting wounded professional pride when after some months Father Jerome showed signs of concern over the lack of results. After six months, Brother George reconditioned the old gristmill to do at least the more necessary grinding. Wolf was finally told that his further services would be dispensed with; to forestall court action, and also to avoid eventual private retaliation, the swindler was paid off, with the mission house losing more than \$2,000. Thereupon John Berger, from nearby Huntingburg, was called to rebuild the works, which he did within thirty days.²² After that a great deal of work was done in the two mills. Yet the mills, which Father Ulrich had expected to be a financial bonanza for the Mission House, had become a financial burden

²² *Journal*, July 28, 1855; Jan. 2, 1856; Jan. 12, 1856; Feb. 5, 1856; March 11, 1856. St. M. Ll. V, pp. 576-577 (Jerome to Abbot Henry, "Within the Octave of St. Meinrad, 1856").

entailing a loss of from \$14,000 to \$16,000. Apart from the initial defects of the works, so long as the Mission House was running the mills many people expected to have their grain ground or their logs sawed gratis.²³

In 1861, Father Martin Marty rented out the mills for, annually, \$800; and in the summer of 1862 he availed himself of the welcome opportunity to sell them for \$7,500 to the brothers James and John Marendt, of Ferdinand. They did not pay in cash but asked the monastery to carry the sum as a loan to them at 6% interest; all was to be paid by them in due time.

But the Marendt brothers were neither business men nor mechanics. When after ten years they had paid nothing on the capital and had allowed it and the interest to accumulate to \$10,000, the monastery had to take court action to regain possession of the property, with the loss of \$2,500 interest.²⁵

Years later, John Marendt, then employed by the monastery, one day fired the boiler and then noticed that the water gauge indicated an empty boiler. He quickly turned on the water valve. The next instant he stood up to his armpits in loose bricks and other debris; but he was not hurt. Half of the boiler stared him in the face; the other half had taken to the air and landed on the other bank of the Anderson.

When the steady use of steam power had made the big water turbine useless, the turbine was hauled up to the monastery building. There its thick steel shaft eventually was sawed into sections of appropriate length and these were made into the loud-throated cannons which for many years helped to solemnize the greater religious celebrations at St. Meinrad.

In the petition that Einsiedeln had presented to the Holy Father it was specified that the chief external work of the new foundation was to be the establishment and conducting of a clerical Seminary.

²³ St. M. Ll. V, p. 938 (Martin to Abbot Henry, Sept. 24, 1862).

²⁴ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 921 (Martin to Abbot Henry, May 1, 1861).

²⁵ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, Property Deeds, Section 12 (Indenture, Nov. 27, 1873).

Father Eugene was of the opinion that America was not enamored of sciences; speculation was indeed well known in commerce and trades but—in the form of speculative science—not in colleges; moreover, he thought, textbooks for the secondary schools were of the practical type throughout, not in the least scientific; and also in the higher schools this factor was predominant:

History, for instance, is a mere narration of facts; dogmatic theology is an explanation of the catechism. Because America has no antiquity it also knows of no science of archaeology, and classical literature is nothing but a mass of bad romances.

In colleges, indeed, Latin, Greek, and perhaps even Hebrew are taught, but, good heavens, how!—You see, the field of science lies fallow before us, and even alone in this regard St. Meinrad has a beautiful field of activity. I entertain the hope that St. Meinrad will be for North America what St. Gall once was for Germany and Europe. A bold hope, you will say, but, I assure you, not an unfounded one. Already now we are, as it were, stormed to take over the education of sons from the best homes. If we had a roomy house and teachers in it, we could here accomplish more than at Einsiedeln. But Rome was not built in a day, and St. Gall and Einsiedeln were at first only a little mustard seed. But in America the saying is: "*Tempus breve est.*" Here everything is run by steam, and therefore it were well if we had a good builder, who at the same time could also pay.²⁶

On April 17, 1854, Father Bede brought from Cannelton two of his young parishioners, Joseph Key and Robert Huntington.²⁷ The two boys, especially Robert, were from socially prominent homes. Judge Elisha Mills Huntington, an "infidel," born on March 26(?), 1806, had been appointed judge of the Indiana District Federal Court by President Van Buren in May, 1842. He was known far and wide as the hospitable master of "Mistletoe Lodge," near Cannelton. His

²⁶ St. M. Ll. X, pp. 1122-1123 (P. Eugene to a confrere at Einsiedeln, May 26, 1854).

²⁷ St. M. Ll. X, p. 1126 (Eugene Schwerzmann, O.S.B., to Abbot Henry, May 26, 1854).

excellent wife, Susan Mary, a Catholic, died on December 3, 1853. Three and a half months later, Father Bede brought Joseph Key and Robert Huntington to St. Meinrad.

The course outlined for the school was: (1) Christian Doctrine; (2) German and English Language and Literature; (3) History, Geography, and Natural History; (4) Mathematics. Later, according to how much progress they made, the students were to apply themselves to: (1) Latin and Greek Language and Literature; (2) History of Religion and General History; (3) Natural Sci-



FATHER EUGENE'S PENCIL SKETCH OF ST. MEINRAD PRIORY

The Lean-to—the First School—Constructed in April, 1854.

ence; (4) Algebra and Geometry. Music and other branches were electives, depending upon the request of the parents of the pupils. Board and lodging were, annually, \$100, of which half was to be prepaid semiannually. Laundering and mending, and other personal expenses, such as stationery, were, of course, extra.²⁸

The recently constructed lean-to on the west side of the log house was the "school." It consisted of three very small and low rooms: one served as a sleeping room and office for the "Faculty" (Father Eugene); one was used by the two students as a dormitory; the remaining room was used as a classroom. A vacation of two months, made necessary by the heat, began with July.

Starting the school, which was all but forced by Father Bede's

²⁸ *Journal*, p. 11. May, 1854.

bringing the two boys to St. Meinrad, was judged to be premature by Fathers Jerome and Eugene. Upon the latter's death, the school was suspended for the time being.²⁹ Yet, was it a failure? Judge Elisha Huntington, who, in 1858, moved to Terre Haute, was there instructed and was baptized by Father Bede on May 25, 1862.³⁰ Father Bede was at that time the rector of St. Joseph Church. Judge John James Key, the father of the other student, later also became a convert.

In that humble beginning of the school at St. Meinrad, only God could see the seed of the intended Minor and Major Seminaries for the education of a native clergy. God alone knew the full growth with which these institutions were to be blessed in years to come.

²⁹ St. M. Ll. XII, pp. 1388-1393 (Jerome to Abbot Henry, July 8, 1854); X, p. 1128 (Eugene to Abbot Henry, July 30, 1854).

³⁰ "Die 25 Maii, 1862, Baptizavi adultum Elisaeum judicem Huntington, Supremi [?] Status Indianae Tribunalis judicem, antea infidelem. Sponsor fuit Soror Maria Caecilia. Superior Sororum de Providentia. Annos natus est judex 56. P. Beda O'Connor, O.S.B." Transcript from *Baptismal Record, 1854-1862*. (St. Joseph's Church, Terre Haute), p. 266.—According to Thomas James de la Hunt, *Perry County* (1916), p. 127, E. M. Huntington was born on March 27, 1806; but *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, ed. Wilson-Fiske (New York 1887), gives March 26.

CHAPTER V

YEARS OF UNCERTAINTY, 1854-1861

ABBOT HENRY was intent upon establishing St. Meinrad on a secure canonical basis as well as an economic one, convinced that only thus could it hope to unfold successfully its Benedictine program of prayer and work both within and without the cloister.

After their first meeting with Bishop Maurice de St. Palais, Father Ulrich, on February 18, 1853, wrote to his Abbot that the Bishop had told Father Bede and himself that he would hand over to them the missions centered around Ferdinand and that in that district, which was to be assigned exclusively to them, they were in every regard to have the same standing as Einsiedeln enjoyed according to the agreement that it had with the European Bishops.¹

It took time to find the exact meaning of the Bishop's words. Yet Father Ulrich wrote again on May 9: "Concerning the concordat, the Bishop will sign it without fail."²

Pursuant to this quite positive assurance, the Abbot sent a form of the agreement under which Einsiedeln was doing pastoral work entrusted to it by the Bishop of the Diocese in which it was located; this form included the right of patronage and of incorporation with full right.³

The Bishop was not pleased with this form and he declined to sign it; he wrote that he intended to consent merely that the

¹ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 383.

² *Ibid.*, p. 402; cf. XII, pp. 1316-1362 (Jerome to the Abbot, Feb. 13, 1854).

³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *St. Meinrad's Priory, 1854*.

foundation be made in his Diocese.⁴ Father Kundek told Father Jerome that "some who presumably are no friends of religious orders are frightening the Bishop with many bugbears." Pressure, arising from apprehension on the part of the influential pioneer French clergy as to the coming predominance of German immigration and of German-speaking priests, may have been brought to bear upon the Bishop. As early as 1851, Audran, of the cathedral, writing to his uncle, Bishop-resigned Hailandière, expressed the fear that before long the whole Diocese, priests and laity, would be German. Father Jerome wrote to the Abbot that it was his impression that the Bishop would prefer that the Fathers be available as mobile missionaries rather than to see them devote themselves to the development of a permanent establishment, although, Father Jerome added, a strong permanent establishment would eventually furnish the Diocese with more missionaries than the Bishop could hope to receive from Einsiedeln.⁵

Convinced that the mission work of the Fathers could not be continued successfully unless it proceeded from a firmly established community life and was safeguarded by a canonical agreement with the Bishop, the Abbot wrote to Father Jerome on June 20, on July 7, and again, on August 10, that, if such an agreement could not be reached, he should withdraw the Fathers from the missions, so that at St. Meinrad a monastic community life could be begun, in connection with which a school for the education of young men should be conducted. The Abbot even spoke of giving up the whole project.⁶

Alarmed, the four Fathers assembled in Chapter, on August 2, 1854, to discuss, among other points, a new form of concordat, one that might prove to be acceptable both to the Abbot and to the Bishop. Father Bede, as secretary to the Chapter, was directed to present this new form to the Bishop.⁷ This form found favor with the Bishop;

⁴ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1382 (Jerome to Abbot Henry, May 29, 1854).

⁵ *Ibid*; Notre Dame U. archives (Audran to Hailandière, June 17, 1851).

⁶ St. M. Ll. II, 52-58.

⁷ St. M. Ll. XII, pp. 1393-1394. 1397 (Jerome to the Abbot, Aug. 7, 1854; Aug. 21, 1854); V. p. 659 (Bede to the Dean of Eins., Jan. 9, 1855).

it could well do so because in it he would bind himself to consent permanently only that the foundation could be made in his Diocese according to the ordinary regulations of the Council of Trent and that he would grant the Fathers the ordinary pastoral faculties in case he chose to entrust congregations to them. In his letter to the Abbot on October 4, 1854, the Bishop indeed repeated his generous intention to commit the pastoral care of the district in question exclusively to St. Meinrad, but that intention found no explicit mention in the agreement itself. He wrote:

Ever since your Fathers came to my Diocese, I have repeated to them that in receiving them it was my intention that they should enjoy all the privileges that the Council of Trent accords to religious Orders, as also the special privileges that the Holy See has granted to the Benedictine Order and to your Convent in particular. I did not sign the first concordat submitted to me because it contained concessions which, so it appeared to me, would later be bound to cause great difficulties and would become the source of considerable disturbances to the Bishop of Vincennes and to the religious of St. Meinrad. In a country such as America is, where lay persons want to meddle in everything, it is necessary that there be someone to stand between the religious and the people; and I am of the opinion that the privilege of the right of patronage, of which mention has been made, would cause your Fathers very disagreeable experiences.

I have signed the agreement that I enclose for you, and I am ready to make any concession that tends to be conducive to the best of religion; but the United States being merely a mission country where as yet nothing is fixed regarding things temporal and where the boundaries of congregations and the powers of the pastors are not at all determined, I think it is better to hold oneself to general terms and to wait till circumstances and time make known how the details are to be arranged. The progress of religion and the sanctification of souls will be the motives that will always determine my relations to your religious, and I shall consequently respect all privileges that the Church, more

wise than we, has accorded to your Order for the attainment of that twofold purpose.

It is my wish that the Benedictines be not disturbed by the proximity of secular priests; and I therefore should like that, as far as this is possible to them, they themselves should take charge of the missions surrounding the monastery, in the execution of which I would give each one of the religious in charge of a mission the same rights that a secular priest would have.

I can only praise the conduct and the zeal of those of your Fathers who already are in my Diocese, as also on my part I do not think that they can complain that I have been a hindrance to the accomplishment of their special purpose.⁸

The articles of the formal agreement that the Bishop submitted were substantially as follows:

1. The Bishop of Vincennes approves as best he can the foundation together with all its territory acquired, or still to be acquired, and the church to be joined to it as enjoying full passive exemption, so that neither the territory nor the religious who live there, or who are to come there in future, are subject to episcopal jurisdiction or visitation.

2. The Bishop will admit and approve for his whole Diocese all the priest-religious whom the Abbot in conscience will have thought properly qualified and will have presented to him, if they are possessed of letters in due form.

3. In case the Bishop chooses to commit congregations, missions, or parishes to the care of the priory, he will accept any of the Fathers presented to him by the Abbot, through the hands of the Prior at St. Meinrad, and grant him all the faculties that he will judge necessary, safeguarding the right of the religious superior at his discretion again, if necessary, to recall such a one. A Father thus appointed is to be subject in all matters pertaining to the care of souls to the Ordinary of the Diocese, who may also remove him, if he so chooses. Furthermore, his administration of the parish must comply with the diocesan regulations.

⁸ St. M. Ll. II, pp. 181-182.

4. The Bishop will grant the faculty to absolve from cases reserved, or to be reserved, by him, as also other faculties, immediately to those religious who are serving the missions; but to the rest of the religious, or to some of them, who, living at St. Meinrad, are not engaged in pastoral work, he may at his discretion either grant or deny these faculties, through the hands of the Prior in office.

5. Both parties pledge themselves to watch diligently that the articles of this agreement be complied with in accordance with the decrees of the Holy Synod of Trent.⁹

Fearing that the Abbot might carry out his tentative thought of giving up the foundation—a thought caused by the change of attitude of the Bishop toward the concordat as reported to the Abbot—the Fathers at St. Meinrad recommended the new form to him; they now wrote that taking over of the parishes under the patronage plan would not even be desirable. They suggested to the Abbot that he visit St. Meinrad so that he could form a judgment based upon personal observation.¹⁰

It seems that neither party thought of a third possible arrangement, according to which, excluding the right of patronage and full incorporation, a Bishop and a religious community with the approval of the Apostolic See enter into an agreement in force of which a parish is entrusted permanently to the community in such a way that the community has the right to present for the Bishop's approval and appointment one of its members who, when appointed, is under the jurisdiction and authority of the Bishop, so far as pastoral work is concerned.

Fathers Ulrich and Bede counseled the Abbot not only not to abandon the foundation but rather to send reinforcements that would be willing to devote themselves to mission work. This last request implied a censure of Father Jerome, who they complained did not devote himself enough to mission work; that, in fact, at his first meeting with the Bishop he told him that he had come "*non praedicandi sed arandi causa*" ("not to preach, but to plow").¹¹ Yet Fa-

⁹ St. M. Ll. II, pp. 185-186. ¹⁰ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1382; V, pp. 632-634. 659.

¹¹ St. M. Ll. V, pp. 633-635 (Bede to the Abbot, Aug. 19, 1854).

ther Jerome was the only priest at home throughout the week, since Father Eugene took care of Fulda on Sundays and Holy Days. And so it is hard to see what else Father Jerome, the Superior and Econome, should have done but stay at home to take care of affairs both spiritual and temporal.

In his letter to the Abbot the Bishop also had urgently requested that more German-speaking priests be sent to his Diocese; he said he could use twenty immediately. In his reply on December 31, the Abbot pointed out, first, that of the monastery's sixty priests twenty-five had charge of parishes and other dependencies of the Abbey and that the thirty-five at home had to teach in its schools and take spiritual care of 150,000 pilgrims annually, a task most important "at a time when nearly everywhere in the old countries of Europe the enemy of God together with his supporters has declared a war to the finish on the last religious elements of our old society." He continued:

I should be happy if I with all my community could join you in the vast state of Indiana and help you cultivate a soil less ungrateful than the country where we now are. But before we take this extreme step, we have duties toward this country, duties which we are going to fulfill to the end. We must, therefore, make supreme efforts to save and defend this Abbey against all united efforts, this Abbey which at present is almost the only point of support of the Catholics in the unhappy Switzerland of our days. Behold, Your Lordship, the reason for the perplexity in which I am: on the one hand, the duty which holds us here, on the other hand, the beautiful prospect of an activity, also great, and better appreciated, near you in your Diocese of Vincennes. May God inspire and enlighten us.

I have examined the concordat which Your Grace has kindly proposed to me and have found nothing therein that is not a new proof of the high wisdom of Your Grace and of your particular goodness toward our Monastery and toward my religious now in Indiana. I only take the liberty to add to article 4 the following passage, which, of course, must be included in all agreements of this kind. I there add the following words: "as likewise it is reserved to the Ab-

bot at his discretion to deprive any one of his monks of these faculties and of this spiritual jurisdiction."

Having mentioned the fact that he had already sent three Fathers to do missionary work in the diocese of Vincennes and a fourth one, Father Jerome, to manage the temporalities of St. Meinrad, he informed the Bishop why it was not advisable to send more help just then:

Ever since our first expedition our adversaries have uttered cries of alarm, saying that we wanted to remove our personnel and our goods from our country in order to transport them beyond the ocean. These malevolent insinuations were redoubled at the occasion of the second sending, and now, as a new departure is suspected and as it is known that the Abbey really possesses considerable property in Indiana, a strong endeavor is made to make the government take an unfavorable stand against us. There is talk of taking vigorous measures against the Abbey to prevent it from again sending missionaries. And as we now are in a time in which the constitution of the country is being revised, in which revision our monastery will be in question, it would be very imprudent and would put our monastery in real danger if we would choose this very moment to make a new missionary expedition; we should even be running the risk that they would refuse them the passports necessary for the voyage. This is at the moment our situation, Your Lordship, and you easily see that we must try not to force things, because that would mean increase of danger and would be a risky venture for the moment. We shall remain quiet and let the storm pass.¹²

Even though regard for the adverse political situation for the time being counseled against sending more Fathers, the Abbot was pleased at seeing an opportunity to strengthen the personnel at St. Meinrad in another way. Lay Brothers have an important role in the life of a Benedictine monastery. Of those—who at Einsiedeln were solemnly professed—there were too few to send any to St.

¹² St. M. Ll. II, pp. 182-184.

Meinrad, for Einsiedeln was greatly restricted by Civil Law as to the numbers to whom it could pledge support (*titulus mensae*).

But the Abbot did interest himself in seven young men from Württemberg, *Schwabenland*. These youths had read in the newspapers about the Abbey's mission project, and they resolved to cast their lot with the new foundation. When they applied at Einsiedeln, the Abbot acquainted them with the conditions under which they would be received. These conditions had been published and circulated as early as May 3, 1853: any applicant would go to St. Meinrad at his own risk and expense; if, after a long period of probation and novitiate, he were admitted to simple religious vows, he would thereby be affiliated to the mission house, not to Einsiedeln. By these and similar provisions Einsiedeln took care to safeguard itself against coming into conflict with the laws of Switzerland. Before they set out for America, the seven applicants formally and over their signatures agreed to these conditions.¹³ The seven were commonly referred to as "*Die sieben Schwaben*"; they were Paul Walser, Moritz Kempfer, Johann Georg Zeiler, Jakob Weiss, Blasius Sauer, Anton Steinhauser, and Frank Haeusler.

After a wearisome journey of eighty-two days, they landed at Troy, Indiana, on July 2, 1854, at four o'clock in the morning. Since it was Sunday, they at once inquired for the church and for Father Bede, to whom they had been directed. Told that on that day he was to say Mass at Cannelton, they hurriedly walked to Cannelton, a distance of nearly seven miles. They were disappointed when, having arrived at Cannelton, they were informed that he was saying Mass at some other mission. Nothing daunted, they walked back to Troy.

On Monday, toward evening, they mounted a wagon headed for Fulda. The next morning, after they had attended Mass at Fulda, they called upon Father Eugene. Later, when they looked for the wagon, the teamster had driven off with it. And so they set out on

¹³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (Abbot Henry to Ulrich, May 4, 1853); St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1544-1545; *ibid.*, IV pp. 559-560 (Athanasius to Ulrich, March 15, 1859).

foot to cover the distance of five miles from Fulda to St. Meinrad.

Not far from St. Meinrad they found the horses and the wagon mired in deep water and mud; in those days the roads often led through gullies and creeks. The driver was nowhere to be seen. Gripping the spokes, they pushed wagon and horses onto more solid ground—“*ein ächter Schwabenstreich*.” With some difficulties—the horses were not accustomed to Schwäbisch—they drove a short distance. Then they were met by the teamster and Brother Candidate Louis, who were coming from St. Meinrad with two yoke of oxen to help the horses pull out the wagon. And thus, on July 4, the “*sieben Schwaben*” made their entry into St. Meinrad.¹⁴

Father Jerome was deeply gratified with the newcomers. They joined the three Brother Candidates already there, namely, Louis Neubauer, Anton Geiger, and Mathias Bader. What Father Jerome now needed was a good Instructor and some ascetical books. He writes of the order of the day for the Brother Candidates as follows:

Rising at daybreak; morning prayer, spiritual reading, and meditation in common; holy Mass; at six o'clock in the evening, supper followed by the rosary in common, litany, and night prayers, whereupon a spiritual song that resounds far and wide throughout the bush. In between [morning prayers and night prayers], work in abundance. To our joy the *Schwaben* are good singers. Next Sunday I will for the first time [since the solemn dedication] have High Mass and Vespers and for the rest of the time celebrate the Lord's day with spiritual reading and lectures.¹⁵

Later, when sufficiently instructed, they recited also the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin; those who worked in the mills, about one mile distant from the monastery, recited it and said their other prayers at the proper time at the place of work.¹⁶

Amusing incidents were not wanting in the peaceful solitude. Once, in December of that year, when the Brother Candidates were

¹⁴ St. M. Ll. III, pp. 286-287 (Moritz Kempter to the Dean of Einsiedeln, April 6, 1854); pp. 288-291 (the seven, to the same, July 15, 1854).

¹⁵ St. M. Ll. XII, pp. 1387-1388 (Jerome to the Abbot, July 8, 1854).

¹⁶ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 470.

alone at home, a flock of sixteen turkeys, coming from the woods, flew into the cloister yard. The hoarse whisper, "Wild turkeys!" quickly brought every available gun into action. The birds seemed so confused by the rapid-fire attack that not even one of them escaped; some were dispatched with clubs and pitchforks. Delighted at their easily acquired provisions, the Candidates generously shared their abundance with others: Candidate Louis took one turkey to Father Ulrich, at Ferdinand, and one to Father Kundek, at Jasper.

Days later, a Mr. Hill, from about two miles away in Perry County, inquired about his flock of sixteen turkeys that had gone astray. When he heard what had happened, he was very reasonable about the mass slaughter of his tame turkeys; he was satisfied with a total compensation of seven dollars.¹⁷

The first year of St. Meinrad was discouraging for more reasons than financial stress, drought, and crop failure. A sort of cholera, ravaging a large part of the country, took its toll also in this part of the land. Father Bede, who had worn himself out ministering to many stricken with this disease throughout his extensive mission field, was suffering himself from a milder form of it by the end of August; and so Father Jerome recalled him to St. Meinrad to recuperate.

At St. Meinrad there was much malaria fever, a result of the yet undrained Anderson valley and the consequent swarms of mosquitoes and infected water. Of the Brother Candidates and Sales Kälín and another workman, twelve persons in all, at times only six would be at table. It was a great trial for twelve persons, well or sick, to go up and down the narrow crude stairs to and from their cots in the low-roofed garret. One of the Fathers later wrote: "We were packed together like herring."

Father Eugene, pastor of Fulda, managed the mills, taught the two boys and, after the closing of school, the Brother Candidates also. He had been ailing occasionally since the previous winter. Though not feeling well, he officiated at Fulda on Sunday, July 30. After-

¹⁷ *Journal*, pp. 30-31; St. M. Ll. IV, pp. 368-374 (Athanasius to the Abbot, July 8, 1855).

wards, clad in the rather heavy religious habit, he walked to St. Meinrad, according to his custom. He arrived quite exhausted; this time it had taken him three hours to cover the five miles.

Father Eugene declined Father Jerome's offer to summon a physician, trusting that self-ministration together with the recuperative powers of his constitution would restore him. He was in the prime of manhood, only forty-four years old. But when the patient's condition grew alarmingly worse in the course of that week, Father Jerome sent for the physician on Saturday.

After High Mass on the next day, Sunday, the patient requested Father Jerome to administer the last sacraments to him. He received the sacred rites devoutly and was fully resigned to the will of God. The solemn function was witnessed not only by the little community but also by the laity that had remained after Mass; all were greatly edified by Father Eugene's Christian spirit in the crisis of his life.

At about five o'clock on Monday evening August 7, a second violent convulsion of the patient's body preceded his painful agony of two hours. He died peacefully at seven o'clock.¹⁸

Since St. Meinrad lay within the limits of St. Ferdinand parish, Fathers Jerome and Ulrich planned to bury Father Eugene in the cemetery at Ferdinand, especially since many people of Ferdinand had requested that this be done. But when the people of Fulda earnestly begged that their pastor be buried in their cemetery, the Fathers, to avoid any ill feeling, finally decided to bury him at St. Meinrad. Accordingly they staked off a place for a monastic cemetery about 150 feet south of the house—about fifty feet south of the southeast corner of the present St. Placid Hall—gave the site the ecclesiastical blessing, and there, on August 8, at six o'clock in the evening, buried the first victim of the hardships of the pioneer days of St. Meinrad.¹⁹

Sales Kälín, the layman who had come to St. Meinrad with Father Jerome, suffered much from so-called "gall fever" and from

¹⁸ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1393 (Jerome to the Abbot, Aug. 7, 1854).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1396-1397 (Jerome to the Abbot, Aug. 21, 1854); *Journal*, p. 15.

malaria. He was reluctant to use any remedy not ordered by Father Bede. Father Prior Jerome had directed him to have a good sweat. But Sales dreaded sweating. Father Prior asked him: "Did you sweat?" "No!" "But why not?" "I couldn't." "Why couldn't you?" "It's much too hot to sweat." Yet when Father Bede told him to sweat, it was not too hot.

Kälin had improved for some weeks, but his malady again took a serious turn. He was quite resigned, often repeating, "My God and my all." Even in delirium he seemed to pray constantly and to pronounce the holy names "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph." He died at half past two in the morning of October 22 and was buried beside Father Eugene, at five o'clock in the evening of the same day.²⁰

Moritz Kempter, the best of the seven young men from Württemberg, had been for some time suffering from chills and tuberculosis. Though for weeks kept from harder work, he wanted at least to do lighter work in and around the house. Alarmed by the change that was coming over the young man, Father Bede finally suggested that he rest completely. Yet he, too, died, on November 15. Father Bede made this entry into the house journal: "Today, at about 12:30 o'clock, there died of tuberculosis, Candidate Moritz Kempter of Götlshöfen, Oberamt Wanger, Württemberg, fortified with the holy sacraments of the dying. Always a pious Brother, in his last illness he edified all by the cheerfulness with which he looked forward to his dissolution."²¹

Prior Jerome may have been a good administrator and superior in the solidly established Einsiedeln. But it was quite a different task for him to be all that in the foundation that was to be hewn out of the backwoods of Indiana. Before long, his associates wrote to Einsiedeln that he had neither sufficient initiative and diplomacy nor enough poise and religious observance to cope with the situation in which he had been placed.

²⁰ St. M. Ll. V. p. 637 (Bede to the Abbot, Sept., 9, 1854); *ibid.*, p. 646 (Bede to a confrere, Nov. 2, 1854); *Journal*, p. 19.

²¹ *Journal*, p. 21; St. M. Ll. V, p. 649 (Bede to the Dean of Einsiedeln, Nov. 15, 1854).

On June 29, 1854, and still more urgently on July 30, only eight days before his death, Father Eugene, writing to Abbot Henry, in a restrained and solemn manner expressed his grave fears for the continuance of St. Meinrad if Father Jerome were to continue to be the superior. The situation, he wrote in the first letter, demanded the Abbot's personal presence at St. Meinrad.²²

Even before he had received Father Eugene's second letter, the Abbot wrote to Father Jerome, on August 10, that since to his regret the Swiss political situation for the time being prevented him from carrying out his intention of visiting St. Meinrad, Father Jerome must come to Einsiedeln, ready to present a complete and well-documented report. Over and above several minor items, the Abbot pointed out that, whereas at first he had been informed that the Bishop intended to grant the new foundation the same ecclesiastical rights and privileges that Einsiedeln enjoyed in its relation to the Bishops in Europe, he was now informed that the Bishop had no such intention. Further, whereas at first he was told that \$2,000 would be enough for the purchase of property almost as extensive as that now held, he had already up to date been required to advance \$12,000. "You see, therefore, the seriousness of the question: should we continue or should we completely give up the beautiful work we have begun there?"²³

In his answer to the Abbot's letter Father Jerome on September 7 endeavored to allay his fears. Concerning the reports about the climate, he wrote that according to old settlers the current summer was exceptional as to heat and drought; that, with regard to lack of unity among the three Fathers, there indeed were differences of opinion as to details and methods, but that there was unity as to the main objective. He asked that judgment about the liquidation of St. Meinrad be suspended and that he be allowed to postpone the journey to Einsiedeln until after the fall work on the farm.²⁴

On August 19, the Abbot, following up his previous letter, di-

²² St. M. Ll. X, pp. 1127-1129.

²³ St. M. Ll. II, pp. 55-58.

²⁴ St. M. Ll. XII, pp. 1400-1402.

rected Father Jerome that, if any of the property was in his name, as a precaution against any eventuality he should in the form of a will bequeath all to one of his associates "so that we can here deal without hindrance in case we have to proceed to a complete liquidation. The thought is dreadful to me, and I still hope that God will not permit his work to perish. But God can and will not bless it so long as our forces there are split up and there is not one heart and mind among those who have been entrusted with this important undertaking."²⁵

Finally, having received Father Eugene's letter of July 30, the Abbot put Fathers Ulrich and Bede under strict obedience to send him conscientious reports about the situation in St. Meinrad.²⁶ But even before this formal command arrived, these two had their written opinions on the way to Einsiedeln.

Father Ulrich's report, embodying his complaints and accusations against Father Jerome, was weakened by his peculiar personal attitude and tone, which were positively insolent and insulting: he called the Abbot's views "naive," to which he (Ulrich) would pay no attention; he was writing, so he expressed himself, "American—from the fist into the pen."²⁷ Father Bede was more objective in his report, yet also overly insistent, so the Abbot thought, as to the steps to be taken.²⁸ Both maintained positively that with Father Jerome as superior the continuance of St. Meinrad was highly endangered; they requested that, if he were not removed, they be allowed either to go to the Indian missions or to return to Einsiedeln.

On October 9, Father Jerome ceded all the property rights he held in Indiana to Father Bede for the sum of \$5,000. To this transfer of property there was attached the obligation that Father Bede

²⁵ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*.

²⁶ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (Abbot to Jerome, Sept. 7, 1854).

²⁷ St. M. Ll. IV, pp. 430-435 (Ulrich to the Abbot, Aug. 26, 1854; Sept. 14, 1854; Sept. 20, 1854).

²⁸ *Ibid.* V, pp. 632-635, (Bede to the Abbot, Aug. 19, 1854); pp. 638-639 (Bede to the Dean, Sept. 14, 1854); pp. 640-644 (Bede to the Abbot, Sept. 14, 1854); pp. 657-661 (Bede to the Dean, Jan. 9, 1855); Bede to the Abbot, Nov. 12, 1855).

hold and use this property for the purpose of erecting an Einsiedeln-Benedictine mission house and an institution of education according to the direction of whoever might be the local superior appointed by the monastery of Einsiedeln. Father Bede was to make provision that in the event of his demise this property be transferred, either as a legacy or as a sale, to a member of the above-named monastery, and to nobody else.²⁹

At the direction of the Abbot, Father Bede left Cannelton on October 10 with a heavy heart to take over temporarily the office of superior at St. Meinrad, a commission for which he rightly did not consider himself qualified.

At St. Meinrad he found \$25 in the cash box, with practically no provisions laid up for the winter, and he was confronted moreover which a liability amounting to \$7,321, of which \$1,835 had to be paid by the first of January. A visit to Cincinnati, Ohio, during which he knocked at many doors for three weeks, netted him loans to the amount of only \$1,776. Times were hard, and money was scarce.³⁰

Father Jerome had left St. Meinrad on October 12 and had arrived at Einsiedeln on November 11. After hearing Father Jerome's account of his administration and personal conduct, the Abbot wrote a joint letter in December to Fathers Ulrich and Bede. He regretted, so he wrote, the animosity with which the accusations against both the administration and the person of Father Jerome had been made, an animosity against a confrere which would not have been justified even if all had been true. And where were the proofs? Why had Father Ulrich not spoken up when, a long time before Father Jerome was sent, the Abbot had in confidence informed him that he intended to send Father Jerome? (The Abbot put this question to Father Ulrich because his main accusation against Father Jerome was made on account of an alleged happening before the latter's mission to America.) And why had Father Bede later expressed so much joy over the choice of Father Jerome? If Father Jerome had manifested objectionable traits, why was not the Abbot informed at once instead

²⁹ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1408.

³⁰ St. M. Ll. V, pp. 650-656 (Bede to the Abbot, Dec. 1, 1854; Jan. 8, 1855).

of being made to hear of them first through servants? Why was the Abbot blamed for sending at first a form of the concordat under which Einsiedeln was doing pastoral work for the Bishop of its own Diocese, when Father Ulrich had written that the Bishop of Vincennes had spontaneously indicated his willingness to accept it and that he would certainly sign it? Why should it have been taken amiss that the Abbot had inquired about the piece of land that, according to an earlier, formal report, the Reverend Kundek, the Vicar General, was said to have donated? (As a matter of fact, St. Meinrad did not receive such a donation.) He, the Abbot, also knew the text of which they reminded him, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," but he knew also that missionaries could not live off the air. It was strange that those who were reminding him of that text and were preaching mission spirit to him were in the same breath demanding, "Money, or we perish." Why did they always speak of a monastery, of a New Einsiedeln, when he constantly cautioned against such high ideas and designated Einsiedeln's new possession with the modest name, "Meinrad's Cell"? There were a few other justly merited rebukes, too, evoked especially by the unbecoming attitude that Father Ulrich had assumed toward his Superior. The Abbot continued:

So long as the present tension exists and so long as I cannot be sure what to expect on your part, I cannot and may not send a new Superior to America. . . . But I see that it will be ever more difficult to conduct the affairs of the new Institute from here and in its present size always to supply it with the necessary personnel. Therefore I now place before you an entirely new plan . . . about which I should now like to have your opinion. This new plan would consist approximately of the following points:

1. All our holdings there are ceded to one of our members; and he assumes no other obligation toward the monastery than the yearly payment of the interest and the pro rata payment of the obligation incumbent upon said holdings.
2. The grantee makes it his duty to found on this property a mission house of the sort as was intended by the mon-

astery and according to his judgment ordains and cares for everything that will be necessary for it.

3. In spiritual matters the grantee will always remain in union with the Mother Monastery, yet he renounces for himself and his Institute all material rights and claims, as also all Chapter and civil rights in regard to the Mother Monastery.

4. For this plan the sanction of the Holy See will have to be obtained, which is to be sought by the grantee as well as by the monastery.

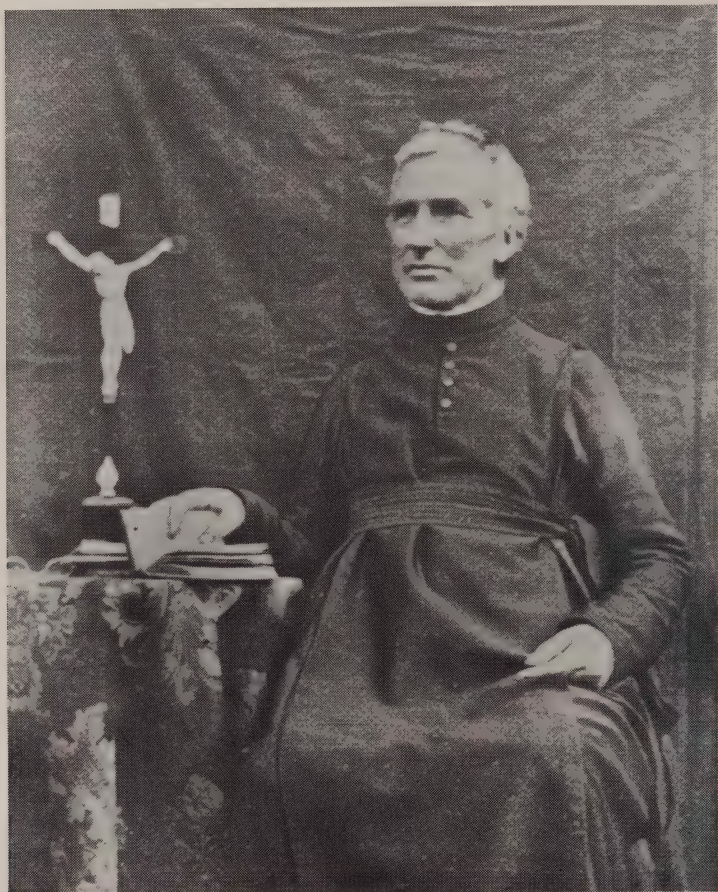
After thus outlining the plan, the Abbot concluded:

... Report to me soon your opinion and express your mind whether perhaps one of you two, or both, would be willing to take over our holdings there under such conditions. If our undertaking succeeds even in this way, and our intended objective is achieved, I can quite easily agree to it, since in this whole affair I have had in mind not myself but the cause. This arrangement would not bar the way for the monastery to continue to participate also immediately in this work of God.³¹

Even though Abbot Henry discounted considerably some of the accusations against Father Jerome, he did not intend to send him back to St. Meinrad. The Abbot chose instead Father Athanasius Tschopp, O.S.B., to go there as the Superior. Father Athanasius, in turn, out of consideration for Father Jerome, magnanimously requested the Abbot to let Father Jerome return with him and under his direction to supervise the manual work. This was to be an opportunity to rehabilitate Father Jerome.

Father Athanasius, born on April 10, 1803, was a noble-minded man. He had been a fellow-student of the Abbot, had been with him in the Novitiate, and had been professed with him. He had taught both Physics and Theology and had successively been the instructor of the Brothers and of the Clerics. When Father Henry had been made Abbot, he appointed Father Athanasius Dean of the monastery—a position which at Einsiedeln made him the re-

³¹ St. M. Ll. III, pp. 255-257.



FATHER ATHANASIUS TSCHOPP, O.S.B.
Second Prior

sponsible director of the community life of the monastery.³² The Abbot's eyes overflowed with tears as his trusted friend took leave of him.

In his letter of recommendation, dated May 1, 1855, to the Bishop of Vincennes, Abbot Henry wrote that since the adverse political situation in Switzerland had now improved sufficiently to make it safe to send more missionaries, he was sending Father Athanasius

³² *Studien u. Mittheilungen aus dem Benediktiner- und Cisterzienser-Orden*. IV, pp. 417-420; Henggeler, *Professbuch*, III, p. 508. No. 547.

Tschopp. In his company there would be Fathers Jerome Bachmann and Chrysostom Foffa, O.S.B. Of Father Athanasius, he wrote:

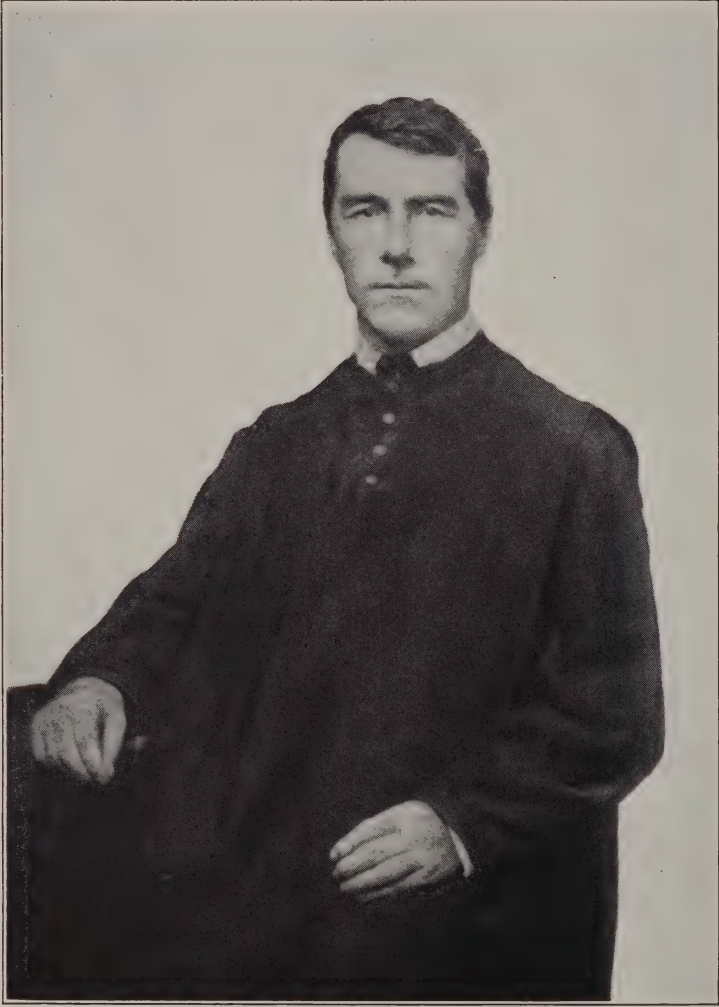
You will appreciate, Your Lordship, how dear this work is to me, when you see that I now give to it the dearest friend, my companion in taking religious vows—I may say, my life companion—the religious exemplar, the Conventual Superior, the Dean, on whom I relied for the interior discipline of our monastery. Such is Father Athanasius Tschopp, who will have the honor to deliver to Your Grace this letter and to whom I entrust the office of Prior at St. Meinrad . . . At his departure he takes with him the regrets of all who know him, their esteem and general regard. He will be missed by us for a long time; but we make this sacrifice for the purpose of resting on him the hope of our transatlantic institute.

Alluding perhaps, to tendencies to carry on mission work to the disregard of a central religious community life, he goes on to request the Bishop's kind support of the new Prior in his efforts "to direct the confreres under his care on the way of the Holy Rule which we profess and which requires that all support in all things the same authority. It is only on this basis that our foundation can be solidly established and that the monk is strong and mighty."³³

Father Chrysostom Foffa, O.S.B., born in 1830, was ordained priest on September 17, 1854. He was six feet two inches tall, broad-shouldered, and of a strong frame. When at his best, he weighed 224 pounds. Father Bede speaks of the Goliathlike gesticulations of the Herculean Goldmouth (Chrysostom). He had a boyish exuberance of spirits and a voice proportioned to his size. He was possessed of good qualities, both of mind and of heart. But his natural good-heartedness notwithstanding, he could be very brusque, even explosive, and he was averse to being tied to a schedule; yet, to his thinking any eventual lack of success to his endeavor never was attributable to him, always to others.

The three missionaries left Einsiedeln on May 2, 1855. Accord-

³³ St. M. Ll. II, pp. 186-187.



FATHER CHRYSOSTOM FOFFA, O.S.B.

ing to the description that Father Athanasius gave of the sea voyage,³⁴ they were sailing on an old ship. When, during a rather stormy crossing the ship creaked and leaked, the passengers were given the not encouraging assurance that that was its last trip.

³⁴ St. M. Ll. IV, pp. 494-501 (Athanasius to the Abbot, New York, May 27, 1855).

The ship almost failed to finish the trip. In a fog that lasted five days the ship lost its bearings, and the captain was, figuratively and literally, at sea. Suddenly, just before midnight, at a quarter of an hour before May 23, there was a crunching jolt from underneath. This was followed quickly by the orders, "Everybody dress!" Fortunately, the ship had run not into a submerged reef but on and partly across a submerged sandbar, where it stuck fast.

When day had come, the fog lifted enough to enable them to see land—only about 200 feet to one side; it was the treacherous Sable Island, off Nova Scotia. They saw several wrecked ships, like skeletons of sea monsters, scattered along the shore. Reverse steam failed to budge the ship. Tons of iron used as ballast, seventy tons of coal, and nearly all the drinking water were thrown overboard and all the freight was moved astern to lighten and raise the fore part of the ship. All in vain.

Two heavy anchors were lowered in the hope that they would take a firm hold on the bottom of the sea. Thereupon the crew and the passengers applied all their power to the windlasses and also to the special hawsers that had been fastened to the anchors.

One of the anchors tore loose; the other held. The wheels, thrown into reverse, frantically churned the sea. The sails bulged with a favorable wind. The crew and passengers used all their strength. But the ship did not budge.

At times some thought they saw the ship move slightly; but Father Athanasius, as an old professor of physics and a careful observer in things mechanical, saw that it only turned a little on the pivotal point where it rested on the sandbar.

Thirteen hours and a half had elapsed when a fresh combined effort was made, for the floodtide was about at its height. Father Athanasius, sighting past an upright line of the ship to a point on the shore, suddenly shouted: "It moves!" The sailors instantly took up the cry, "It moves!" Father Athanasius wrote: "I felt urged to go to the other side of the ship in order amidst tears of joy to pray a *Te Deum laudamus* in thanksgiving."

At seven o'clock in the evening of May 23, the ship stopped again. "Only a screw loose," was the word.

During that night the ship stopped repeatedly for repairs. On May 24, the boat stopped once more, and for an hour the passengers heard hammering and patching on the machinery. "Suddenly there came from below a sound that otherwise one was accustomed to hear only from the steam whistle above; then we heard and felt in several jets a monstrous hissing. The ship again stood still and all the steam was let off. . . ." On May 25, rain fell in streams, and all were busy catching rain water for drinking and washing. On the same day, the sailors sawed up a fine mast that the ship carried, and broke up barrels and anything else that might serve as fuel, because the coal was gone.

Even in docking, at 9:30 the evening of May 26, the ship encountered difficulties. The hawsers snapped twice and it took the ship an hour and a half to come to rest at its berth.

In Cincinnati, Father Athanasius called upon Archbishop John B. Purcell. The Archbishop gave him a friendly welcome and said that no Benedictine should pass through Cincinnati without paying him a visit; he also invited the Benedictines to take over the management of a college situated in a beautiful part of the city. The college had 200 acres connected with it. Father Athanasius had to excuse himself from accepting this offer at that time.³⁵

After a journey which had lasted thirty-five days, the three Fathers, Athanasius, Jerome, and Chrysostom finally arrived at St. Meinrad's Cell at noon of June 6. As the three made the last turn to the right on the road where now the town of St. Meinrad stands and caught sight of the cabin on the hillside, the bell greeted them from the distance, salvos from shotguns saluted them, and Father Bede ran to meet them.

As part of their celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi, which was on the day after their arrival, the Fathers on that same Wednesday evening, and throughout the Octave, sang *Complin* during ex-

³⁵ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 502 (Athanasius to the Abbot, June 7, 1855).

position of the Blessed Sacrament. On the feast itself they celebrated a Solemn High Mass.

The procession, for which triumphal arches and four outdoor altars had been erected, could not be held, because of rain; but to the joy both of the monks and of the settlers scattered here and there it was held on the day of the Octave. A processional cross was made by tying to the top of a pole an ordinary crucifix—the kind one might find hanging on the wall of a monk's cell; the tailor had worked until late the previous night to finish a banner and a "*Himmel*" (baldachin) which rustic connoisseurs pronounced extremely beautiful. The baldachin was only four feet long and three wide, since no more cloth was available.

Father Athanasius carried the Blessed Sacrament. The Deacon (Father Jerome) and the Subdeacon (Father Chrysostom), vested in albs—as yet St. Meinrad had no dalmatics—walked alongside the narrow baldachin, protecting themselves against the burning rays of the sun by umbrellas. The "*Schützen*"—gun club—of Fulda had volunteered to attend and to fire the customary salutes. And Father Bede as Master of Ceremonies walked alongside the procession or showed up here and there along the simply decorated route to give signals by clapping his hands, "*à la Kundek*."³⁶ That was the dawn, glowing and loving, of the glorious Eucharistic celebrations that were to gladden many hearts at St. Meinrad in years to come.

One June 21, Fathers Athanasius and Chrysostom called on the Bishop of Vincennes to present their letter of recommendation and other papers. Father Bede went along as an interpreter, since the Bishop did not like to speak Latin. The Bishop received them very graciously. After a few words of greeting he again expressed his wish of handing over to the Benedictines a closed missionary district with St. Meinrad as center. He also asked that Father Bede again take over Cannelton, which for the time being was taken care of by a

³⁶ *L. c.* p. 368 (Athanasius to the Abbot, July 8, 1855); V. pp. 669-670 (Bede to the Abbot, June 10, 1855).

young priest, Father Marendt, who was also taking care of Troy and Rockport. Father Athanasius thanked the Bishop for his kind offer of a closed missionary district with St. Meinrad as center; but as to Father Bede, he would for the time being have to stay at St. Meinrad both to help consolidate the religious community life, to regain his impaired health, and to serve Fathers Athanasius and Chrysostom as a teacher of English. With that the Bishop was satisfied, yet requested that his wish be complied with soon.³⁷

On September 15, Father Bede was appointed to reside at the parish at Fulda. At his request, Gertrude Kälin, up until then the housekeeper at St. Meinrad, took over the position as housekeeper to Father Bede, at Fulda.³⁸

Father Athanasius soon noticed that the two explorers, Fathers Ulrich and Bede, were quite distant toward Father Jerome and himself. This attitude was understandable insofar as Fathers Ulrich and Bede believed that their complaints against Father Jerome had been motivated by their interest in the Mission House and had not been properly evaluated at Einsiedeln. But Father Ulrich's attitude went distressingly far beyond that.³⁹

On the other hand, it was an especially bitter disappointment to the Prior that Father Jerome did not come up to his expectation. Instead of doing his share in a spirit of forgiveness to make the past forgotten, he by his resentful demeanor toward everybody, including the Prior, furnished whatever additional proof might have been needed that the complaints made against him as superior had been substantially justified. The Candidates also had reason to complain of this; several of them left.

To remedy the congested and unsanitary living conditions in the log cabin during his own short administration, Father Bede had begun to build according to his plan a more spacious two-storied frame building, 68' 1" long and 33' wide. It stood about 60 feet south of the cabin. It was the "old monastery." (The present St. Placid Hall

³⁷ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 370 (Athanasius to the Abbot, July 8, 1855).

³⁸ *Journal*, Sept. 15, 1855.

³⁹ St. M. Ll. IV, pp. 374-381 (Athanasius to the Abbot, Aug. 7, 1855).

was in 1927 built almost totally over the base lines of the old building.) When Father Athanasius arrived, the structural parts of this building had been raised on May 4,⁴⁰ and much other work had been done by June 6; the lumber to finish it was lying about; the shingles for the roof were there; the windows, and even the hinges for the doors were on hand; likewise lumber for a sorely needed church. Yet Father Jerome, though repeatedly directed and finally commanded by his superior to finish the building refused to do so, claiming that it was not planned properly. That forfeited for him the sympathy of Fathers Athanasius and Chrysostom.

Fathers Athanasius and Chrysostom could now appreciate at least to some extent the sharp criticisms of Father Jerome's administration that Fathers Ulrich and Bede had sent to Einsiedeln. Father Athanasius would have suspended him had not Father Chrysostom pleaded with him that in view of the critical state of his health he spare himself this additional worry and eventual public scandal.⁴¹

As to the at least partially unbecoming manner in which the two explorers, especially Father Ulrich, had at times written to the Abbot, Father Athanasius found a somewhat mitigating circumstance from still another angle. He found Father Kundek to be a pious priest, a zealous missionary, and a good business man, but also a man with a quick and strong temper, which, if it met with opposition, would manifest itself quite sharply; then his criticism would not spare even a superior, although he would quickly again contain himself. The two young Benedictines admired Father Kundek and strove to imitate him; but, wrote Father Athanasius, they might well have imitated his good qualities without adopting his faults, faults which found sympathetic vibrations especially in Father Ulrich.⁴²

Shortly after his arrival at St. Meinrad, Father Athanasius showed symptoms of ill health. This condition was aggravated by the trying experiences he was undergoing—"more bitter than death," so he informed the Abbot—in consequence of which he was, by

⁴⁰ *Journal*, p. 37.

⁴¹ St. M. Ll. VI, pp. 730-746 (Chrysostom to the Abbot, March 28, 1856).

⁴² St. M. Ll. VI, pp. 518-519 (Athanasius to the Abbot, Jan. 21, 1856).

October, down with a critical attack of typhoid fever. Holy Viaticum was administered to him. Though he recovered, his recuperation was slow and incomplete.

On December 28, Father Athanasius wrote to the Abbot that in view of his condition he was ready either to return to Einsiedeln or to remain at St. Meinrad, whichever the Abbot would determine; but in the first eventuality, a substitute for himself ought to arrive at St. Meinrad before his departure. Spiritual man that he was, he added: "My stay here has in some regards not hurt me: I hope to God I will return more patient, more humble, more obedient than I was before; I have here gone through a schooling that I would not wish on anyone." In face of the financial and economic situation, he wrote: "Our situation is not to be envied; and yet, once this rubble will have been cleared away, this will be a glorious field of work . . . It seems the dear God wants to try us thoroughly; but in the end He will not deny His grace to persevering confidence."⁴³

The news of Father Athanasius' illness struck terror into the heart of the Abbot and of the whole community at Einsiedeln. "And now this blow!" the Abbot wrote to Father Chrysostom.⁴⁴ "The Lord, then, has shown us clearly that He does not will the work that we have there begun for His honor! But let us compose ourselves." And he exhorted all at the old and at the new Meinrad's Cell to redouble their prayers, placing them at the throne of the Blessed Mother that she might recommend them to her divine Son. In a postscript, he added: "It is my firm resolution, if Father Superior does not fully recover, to sell our whole possession over there as soon as possible or to hand it over to Father Boniface Wimmer, inasmuch as most likely no one of us would any longer care to take it over at his own risk and responsibility."

Recovering from his illness, Father Athanasius wrote to the

⁴³ St. M. Ll. IV, pp. 510-514 (Athanasius to the Abbot, Nov. 11; Dec. 26, 1855).

⁴⁴ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*. Nov. 30, 1855.

Abbot a letter which greatly comforted him;⁴⁵ yet in view of the new difficulties, which seemed to kill all hope, the Abbot reassured him that, if there would seem to be no hope of success, he was at liberty to proceed to a complete liquidation of the foundation, according to the instructions he had received before he left Einsiedeln. Thereupon he and all his confreres should return home, where they would be received with open arms.⁴⁶ Writing again to Father Athanasius on February 14, 1856, the Abbot said:⁴⁷

Let us do what lies in our power, and then the dear God will be satisfied with us. But when I look at the affair with human eyes, there appears no prospect that the work can succeed on the footing on which it now rests. The reasons for this are known to you, my dear Father Prior, because I have in time past acquainted you, as Superior of our community, with all that pertained to this affair.

Having reminded Father Athanasius of the very strenuous efforts that Einsiedeln had made since beginning the foundation at St. Meinrad, and of the sacrifices in more recent times, he continued:

It is understandable that with the differences of opinions prevailing among yourselves, which may all be well meant, the goal we had in mind can not be reached for a long time to come. Just that suggests to me a new plan, which I will now propose and explain to you all. In doing so, I start from the following considerations and experiences:

1. It appears that each new arrival in our mission has to encounter difficulties, partly from the climate, partly from the language and the whole manner of living, of which he can get no idea at this great distance; wherefore recruiting from here is at all events always accompanied with far greater hazards than if one would attempt to recruit the personnel needed from native youths, or even from men of the region, or from such as one could dismiss at discretion.

2. The events and sad experiences up to date have made so depressing an impression on many of our dear confreres

⁴⁵ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 510. (Nov. 11, 1855).

⁴⁶ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

that perhaps the necessary supply would no longer be found here, in consequence of which the project itself would of necessity be endangered or at least be brought into a great predicament.

3. We have had ample experience of how difficult it is to find generous hands for our new St. Meinrad's Cell so long as it is considered to be a Daughter House of Einsiedeln, in which, according to the opinion of all American and European Know-Nothings, there are treasures and wealth in great abundance. Just this prejudice, which exists with regard to almost all monasteries, induced the monasteries in Germany . . . to place their mission Institutes on a footing completely separated from the Mother House. Father Boniface Wimmer left his Mother House without any support, and precisely this circumstance, as also the interesting reports about his work, which in all modesty he sent in from time to time, brought him sympathy and help from all sides in such a measure that his venture can already now be considered secured.

4. We have by now experienced sufficiently how difficult and time-consuming it is, at a distance of about 3000 hours by correspondence, to come to an understanding about everything essential to this affair, about which at times a quick decision is necessary. Especially for this reason Father Boniface and also the Reverend Kundek have before now expressed themselves that, if the undertaking is to prosper, it would sooner or later have to become completely independent and self-reliant.—Guided by such considerations and by experiences already made, my plan now is this:

To transfer our whole possession over there, with all its assets and liabilities, to one alone who, on his own responsibility, without further interference or obligation on the part of the monastery, is to have unrestricted administration. The grantee is to pay the monastery the price of the original purchase, namely 60,000 fr., or one half of the total expenses that have up till now been incurred in this mission venture. The transfer is to be made either to one of our men who has sufficient courage, strength and necessary health for this undertaking, or to our dear friend Father

Kundek, or, finally, to Father Boniface Wimmer, in St. Vincent.

I believe, my dear Father Prior, that in this manner the undertaking that we have begun could, under the present circumstances, happily reach its goal and our beautiful mission project could best be carried out. Under such a completely new organization those of our dear confreres who have a vocation and the qualifications for it and who could be allowed to depart from here for the accomplishment of this purpose could continue to take part in this mission work.

This new plan of the Abbot arrived at St. Meinrad just as Father Chrysostom was finishing a voluminous informative letter to him; in it he had already given an answer to the principal points contained in the Abbot's letter.⁴⁸ Father Chrysostom handed his letter to Father Athanasius, who, himself writing to the Abbot at a later date, approved of Father Chrysostom's answers. As to liquidation, wrote Father Chrysostom, that could not be done except at an enormous loss to Einsiedeln both in reputation and in money. As to transferring all to Father Boniface Wimmer, he had enough debts of his own; besides he had many and much more advantageous offers from various Bishops. With regard to transferring all the property and responsibility to one of the missionaries and thus freeing Einsiedeln of all responsibility, no one would at present at his own risk want to assume that responsibility; besides, in case of failure, everybody would hold Einsiedeln morally responsible just the same. As to separation from Einsiedeln, he wrote:

By no means a separation! By no means a breaking off! With united forces and with trust in God! Forward, with the eye fixed on God, where we can no longer go back. I am convinced, as I am of my existence, that God wills St. Meinrad to be. Let us just let God act; He will clear the way that St. Meinrad is to go. . . . Precisely the humiliations that God has sent upon St. Meinrad, and upon Einsiedeln on account of St. Meinrad, are proof that God wills that St. Meinrad be. God willed that Einsiedeln and all we in

⁴⁸ St. M. LL. VI, pp. 730-746 (March 1-26, 1856).

America acknowledge and confess that we are not able to found a monastery. Once this acknowledgment and confession are established, only then are we fit instruments of God for the foundation of a work decreed in His providence.

During the first week of March, Father Athanasius suffered another critical collapse of his health, which made it advisable again to administer holy Viaticum. But though he felt the physical hardships of the life in the overcrowded cabin and the other difficulties previously mentioned more keenly than ever, he pleaded for the continuance of St. Meinrad. Liquidation, he wrote to the Abbot, would be a great loss not only to Einsiedeln but would be a spiritual and material detriment also to the surrounding Catholic territory.

Oh, your Lordship, up till now the reports have indeed not sounded comforting; but I believe that from now on things will improve somewhat. What is right cannot be established without contradiction and great tribulation. Of my cross I have in all humility and simplicity—in a certain measure with joy—made an offering to the dear God, and I am confident that we shall overcome all hindrances. I believe that the other confreres also endure the many privations and burdens in the same spirit. Not that I attach much worth to my sacrifice; no; but in His goodness and mercy the Lord surely blesses the childlike devotedness to a work that has been undertaken solely for His honor and that is to be continued solely for His honor. That is what makes my confidence unshakeable.

He acknowledged that there was some dissension among the brethren, but that would disappear if the one whose conduct had been the chief cause thereof would be recalled to Einsiedeln. For himself, he felt that the precarious state of his health was a hindrance to his continuation in office; he did not even wish to burden the community with his presence. But that he left in the hands of his Abbot. All this was written with a simplicity that reveals natural poise and spiritual greatness.

With the same simplicity with which he wrote of spiritual things he also wrote some good observations on southern Indiana

zoology, botany, and kindred sciences. It is especially noteworthy that he pointed to the many outcroppings of "a solid, yellowish sandstone," which in later years was to play so important a role in the building activity of St. Meinrad and elsewhere.⁴⁹ For that matter, Father Bede, riding past such outcroppings on his way to the missions, used to muse about the beautiful churches one could build with those stones—if one had the money.

The year 1855 was a prosperous one in field, meadow, and orchard. The threshing of grain was done, according to custom, on the clay floor of the horse stable. The floor was cleaned and allowed to dry; the horses meanwhile were kept elsewhere. Then the sheaves of grain were spread out on the floor and the horses were driven over the grain until the pressure of their hoofs had forced the grain from the hulls. The straw was then removed and the grain carefully winnowed. But the thought of soiling the grain through this very primitive threshing process created in Father Athanasius some repugnance against wheat bread. Two years later, Father Chrysostom bought a threshing machine. This machine besides doing clean work, earned its price of purchase in two years.⁵⁰

Father Athanasius also described the abundance and qualities of wild grapes. On one branch, two feet long and no thicker than a lead pencil, he counted fifteen bunches of grapes, and on one exceptionally large bunch he counted 247 berries. The Fathers even planned to make Mass wine from these grapes. A quantity of wild grapes had been pressed, and someone poured the precious juice into a cask but inadvertently left the spindle of the faucet open. The grape juice ran out of the cask and soaked into the earth.

Speaking of the prevalence of corn bread, Father Athanasius noted as a popular belief that the frequent consumption of corn bread produced blindness in many persons, especially in plethoric women. "It is certain that many horses become blind if they are fed too much Indian corn or even its stalks, which they like since they

⁴⁹ St. M. Ll. IV, pp. 521-540 (Letters to the Abbot and to confreres).

⁵⁰ *Journal*, pp. 124-125, Oct. 1 and 28, 1857.

contain much sugar." Inasmuch as the high sugar content of corn might cause diabetes, which in turn often results in blindness, there may have been some truth to that popular belief.

Since Doctor Kempf, of Ferdinand, who had treated Father Athanasius successfully in two critical attacks of sickness, had advised that the patient return to his native climate, he left St. Meinrad, on August 11, 1856; and because, in view of the precarious state of his health, it was thought to be too risky for him to travel alone, it was diplomatically decided that Father Jerome accompany him.

Just before leaving St. Meinrad, Father Athanasius on August 6 invested the first four Brother Candidates: Paul Walser, George Zeiler, Jacob Weiss, and Anthony Steinhauser. Father Athanasius wanted to perform this investing privately, according to the old custom at Einsiedeln; yet Father Kundek, together with two seminarians and several neighbors, attended the ceremony. Besides Father Chrysostom and these four Novices, there were four Candidates and sixteen hired hands, all living in the one log house. Several were much incapacitated by illness.⁵¹

Father Chrysostom and his men worked hard to finish the new—for their needs, spacious—building; they moved into it shortly after Fathers Athanasius and Jerome had left. During that autumn Father Chrysostom had a well dug about thirty feet off the southwest corner of that building; a divining rod had located it. Within twenty-four hours this well, at a depth of twenty-nine feet, yielded a hundred gallons of clear, wholesome, and cool water. Previously the monks had had to fetch water of an unwholesome quality from a distance of about one half mile.

Writing to Father Chrysostom on January 27, 1857, the Abbot confirmed him as temporary representative of Father Athanasius, whom the Abbot still regarded as the Superior of St. Meinrad. Since Father Chrysostom had in his letter spoken of the new "monastery," the abbot again cautioned him not to entertain nor publish the idea that a monastery, a new Einsiedeln, was being founded—inasmuch

⁵¹ *Journal*, pp. 81-85, Aug. 6 and 11, 1856.

as Einsiedeln had for the time being neither the means nor the men for such an undertaking. Under the prevailing circumstances Einsiedeln simply could not supply more money; yet, barring an extraordinary need or misfortune of the Mother House, the Abbot would do this much: for the remainder of his life he would willingly forego the interest as well as the installment payments on the debt St.



THE FRAME MONASTERY, 1856
South View

Meinrad owed Einsiedeln on the basis of Father Jerome's account of October 9, 1854. Eventually, Abbot Basil, Abbot Henry's successor, magnanimously canceled this obligation of \$12,000.⁵²

It may have been due to Father Ulrich's attitude toward Father Chrysostom that on March 31, 1857, the Abbot issued a formal docu-

⁵² St. M. Ll. I, p. 46; St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 9, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot to Chrysostom, Oct. 9, 1856); *ibid.* Drawer 12, folder, *Abbot Basil Oberholzer* (Abbot Basil to Abbot Martin, June 10, 1875).

ment appointing Father Chrysostom Vicar for Prior Athanasius and commanding all the Fathers to acknowledge and obey him as such.⁵³

Father Chrysostom was a hardy but tempestuous worker. Moreover, complying with requests for clerical assistance here and there, at times he of necessity left St. Meinrad without a superior, for Fathers Ulrich and Bede were stationed each in his own mission. That, of course, was harmful to the young religious community life of the Brother Novices and Candidates.

Then, too, Father Chrysostom began to suffer from malaria, his strong frame alternately shaking with chills and burning with fever. He was told not to drink plain water but to sterilize it with some liquor. That was a popular sanitary precaution in those days, yet one that also contained a danger, especially for him, for he was so constituted that a quantity of liquor that would have no detrimental effect upon the average person would cause him, by nature voluble in speech, to talk inconsiderately—even of community affairs, and that in the presence of outsiders. Yet, when, in 1865, Father Chrysostom was transferred to Terre Haute, Father Isidor wrote: "Who will here fill for us the place of Father Chrysostom? Only now I feel what he has been to us and to the whole region."

It seems that neither Father Chrysostom's lengthy favorable report, previously recorded, nor Father Athanasius' personal report at Einsiedeln had convinced the Abbot that the foundation could be securely established. In the letter just mentioned he spoke not indeed of liquidation but of a reduction of the property at St. Meinrad. He also was much concerned about the Brother Candidates:

A third and just as important a consideration is whether and how we may decide to grant a real admission to the present and the future Brother Candidates in St. Meinrad before we know definitely that they can there find certain and sufficient subsistence. This question is more important than you will perhaps believe at first thought, for if you cast a glance at the contract restrictions under which we are in our homeland, and which do not permit us to give

⁵³ St. M. Ll. II, p. 19.

anyone a *titulum mensae* to our monastery without permission from government authority, you cannot fail to see in what predicaments those who had entered the community in St. Meinrad would have to find themselves when perhaps in time our daughter house would disintegrate or its means of subsistence would not be sufficient. It will not escape your attention with what reclamations we should be molested from this side, a number of inquiries having already come to me as to what the Brothers in question were to receive if the undertaking would fail without their fault. For this reason I have on a former occasion with forethought formulated the pertinent stipulations under which one was to be admitted and I was very careful not to recommend to anyone that he should enter, nor to promise any sort of guarantee either for the present or the future.

Before Father Chrysostom received this cautionary letter, he had, on the feast of St. Meinrad, January 21, 1857, not only invested five additional Candidates with the habit, but had also reopened the school. The prospectus had announced that the pupils were to pay one dollar a week for boarding, lodging, and tuition—an amount certainly insufficient. At first with an attendance of six pupils, the school in the course of the semester had an enrollment of ten, two of whom also took up the study of Latin, with the intention of becoming priests. This marked the beginning of the Minor Seminary and, indirectly, of the Major Seminary at St. Meinrad.

The Fathers at no time had lost sight of the school; but the proximate reason that decided Father Chrysostom, with the consenting counsel of Fathers Ulrich and Bede, to take the step, even in the very unfavorable circumstances existing just then, was the fact that he wanted to furnish congenial occupation for two Novices, Dominic Steinauer and Francis Neukirch, who wanted to become choir monks and, eventually, priests.

Both promptly styled themselves "Professor." "Professor" Steinauer soon was told to leave. His place was taken by a Mr. Wagner, a man of better disposition, yet also not a trained teacher, who formerly had been a Novice of Father Boniface Wimmer. Before

long, Neukirch also left. His task was taken over by Father Isidor Hobi, O.S.B.⁵⁴

In the letter of October 9, 1856, the Abbot had informed Father Chrysostom that he intended to send to St. Meinrad a promising young man. This was Father Isidor, born on January 22, 1830, professed on May 20, 1855, and ordained priest on September 14, 1856.

Father Isidor arrived at St. Meinrad on April 14, 1857.⁵⁵ Though not strong physically, this man was to contribute much to the monastic upbuilding of St. Meinrad, especially to the development of its schools.

Father Isidor at first not only did pastoral work on Sundays at Jasper, where Father Kundek lay sick, and at Celestine, but also had charge of the mills and of the school.

At the end of that semester Father Isidor wrote to a confrere at Einsiedeln about his ten pupils and his work with them:

First, Joseph Maier, the richest citizen of Ferdinand, whose beautiful, big house together with saloon is taken care of by his childless stepfather, Mr. Poschen. . . . The boy already has worn out a pair of pants on the benches of a public school but has all the same remained sound and intact in spirit; a beautiful interior corresponds to his beautiful exterior: he is good-natured, sincere, innocent, and childlike, but as lively as a squirrel. —Eckert, of Jasper . . . is older and bigger than the former, and drinks; he does not hurt the books and these do nothing to him (it is to be hoped he will stay at home). —Jakob Mueller, of Jasper, a healthy, fat boy, with one suspender, one pair of black pants torn crisscross and patched with rags of various colors, without shoes and without stockings, without cap and hat, will have to stay at home the coming year. —Henry Berger: his mother is a Protestant and his father a Freemason. This boy is the most talented and has worked the most and has derived the most benefit from our school. Leingang, of Troy, is the best philosopher of the German

⁵⁴ St. M. Ll. VI, pp. 747-754 (Chrysostom to the Dean at Einsiedeln, Jan. 12, 1857; X. pp. 1138-1142 (Isidor to the Abbot, July 2, 1857).

⁵⁵ *Journal*, p. 114, April 29, 1857.

world: he has thought himself into the simple, absolute nothing so that he thinks simply nothing. —Meinrad Fleischmann, whose home is at Fulda, born in Lachen, Kanton Schwyz, is a memory man; not dumb, very studious, but no genius. —Pfeffer, born in Old Bavaria, is quite original, a talented, but uncultured, wild fellow. —John Schuler, a girlish boy, the darling of his sweet mother.

... These are and were the school boys I found here. Since my arrival, one more came from Cannelton and one from Jasper. Many had to begin with spelling. Few had a decent start; yet I have begun Latin with three; they decline quite nicely "*bonus pater, boni mater, bono animal*," and other edifying word combinations.

Thermometer reading of the scientific status of our boys:

1. In regard to catechism and religious doctrine in general, some at their coming registered freezing point. Most of them have gained much in this regard. ... I have heard the confessions of first communicants at Ferdinand and Jasper, but our boys confessed in the nicest and best manner and their Communion was touching. ...

2. In German they are very weak; although all but one could read, only a few understood what they read, and that had to be in short, simple sentences. ... They are not yet able to form sentences.

3. A number are better in English than in German; some speak very pure English because as children they were among the English-speaking. ... We will endeavor gradually to make English the language of the school. Geography, arithmetic, and United States history are in English; Latin also is taught in English.

On July 10 a good number of people came, bringing nice clothes for the First Communicants. ... That evening, after night prayers, I gave the boys this commencement speech: "Now, boys, sit down again; I must tell you something. School is over. Tomorrow afternoon you can go where you will. You are not going to bring home testimonials. If you know something, people will soon see that; and if you do not know anything, I do not want to put you to shame, and I am not going to write any lying letters;

understand me. Tomorrow morning, at the High Mass, at Holy Communion, do right: do not look around— all people will be looking at you—rather think on this, that your guardian angels are looking upon you and see not only your clothes but also your heart. Pray to the dear Savior before and after Holy Communion. You do not need a prayer book for that; as your heart tells you, so you should pray! Jesus Christ, who is your Savior and about whom you have learned so much during the past year, will tomorrow come into your heart for the first time in your life. Thank Him; and anything good, beautiful, or holy anyone of you wishes for himself or his parents, for that ask the Savior. Also promise Him something. Everyone of you knows best what resolutions and promises he should make. Tomorrow afternoon, at Vespers, you will be enrolled in the Scapular Confraternity. Because the school year has been so short, there will be no long vacation this year. You can come back again in fourteen days. Now go to bed, and tomorrow dress nicely. But do not doll up childishly, as girls do; you are boys and not women. Praised be Jesus Christ!—And they all answered: "Forever, Amen."⁵⁶

Meinrad Fleischman, mentioned as one of the "Latin" pupils, was the first clerical alumnus of St. Meinrad—though not the first to be ordained; he was ordained priest on June 21, 1867; he died on July 6, 1924, a credit to the Diocese and to his Alma Mater.

During the following school year, twenty pupils were enrolled, of which number all but four—the four "Latin" students—were for some reason or other sent home in the course of the year. Among the four retained were Meinrad Fleischmann and John Florentine Sondermann. Father Isidor had met the young Sondermann at Celestine; he was pleased with him and recommended him to the Bishop, who sent him to St. Meinrad. Sondermann, too, became a saintly priest; ordained on September 22, 1868, he died on August 6, 1917.

Though not a musician, Father Isidor had a musical ear and loved music; because he appreciated the cultural value of music, he

⁵⁶ St. M. Ll. X, pp. 1139-1142 (Isidor to Gall, July 18, 1857).

was intent upon acquainting his students at least with its rudiments, especially in singing. On April 23, 1858, he wrote to Father Martin at Einsiedeln:

Last Tuesday I rode to Ferdinand and allowed the four [Latin scholars] to go along so that they might hear and see the [pipe] organ. . . . Never in their life had they seen or heard an organ. I cannot describe to you the faces they made, how they opened eyes and ears as the school teacher, a good organist, sat on the long chair, first fired up, then declaimed with the feet, and finally began to drum with the fingers.

Do you know that I play the violin? You ought to hear that. Last summer I accidentally found on a wardrobe a thing in the shape of a violin. It was covered thickly with dust and dirt. Upon being cleaned, it turned out to be the violin of Father Eugene of blessed memory. I had pity on the poor instrument and took it to my room, where it is to the present day. There was but one string, and I did not know whether it was a *D* or an *A*; I stretched it as a *D* string, and that it really was. I first had to find the intervals for whole and half tones because in all my life I had never played the scale on a violin. The first that I tride to fiddle was the *Ave Maria*. But the higher tones screeched very unpleasantly and, on account of my fiddling, the house dog and company avoided my room for a rather long time. And so for some time I played on the one string; which was bearable to my ear because I heard nothing better. This year I went to Ferdinand to look for strings. Teacher Jutt gave me several, which I stretched. Playing diligently on the violin, I got so far that I can with considerable ease play the soprano or bass of several songs from the *Marienrosen* [a collection of Blessed Virgin songs, by Anselm Schubiger, O.S.B., of Einsiedeln], also the [Gregorian] chant. This instrument is of much help to me in instructing in singing. This violin is played regularly on all first- and second-class feasts; on the more solemn ones also at Vespers and Complin; on O.A.'s (feasts on which the Abbot officiates) and also at the Little Hours. At the end of the biggest feasts I always play *O Tannenbaum*.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ St. M. Ll. X, p. 1147.

In 1858 and 1859, sad days came again upon the incipient seminary. J. F. Sondermann wrote in his "*Tage-Buch*" (diary):

I now was very happy and fervently began my studies in preparation for the priesthood. But my good fortune was not of long duration because already in the following year a big change was made at St. Meinrad. P. Ulrich Christen was made Prior, P. Isidor Hobi, our beloved professor, was transferred to Ferdinand as pastor, P. Chrysostom Foffa to Fulda, and P. Bede O'Connor to Jasper. Thereupon the school at St. Meinrad still eked out a scant existence until May, 1858, under the direction of various professors—Leo Preis[er], Rev. Meier, and the notorious Kopletter—and then was closed. The Bishop of Vincennes first took his students to Vincennes, then, in the beginning of September, 1860, sent those of the Minor Seminary to St. Thomas, near Bardstown, keeping the theologians at Vincennes.

After the vacation the school opened again in September, 1858, with an enrollment of six pupils, Meinrad Fleischmann and Florentine Sondermann among them, and continued throughout that scholastic year; even though Father Isidor was, from October on, pastor at Ferdinand, he would come to St. Meinrad to teach.

In the spring of 1857, Father Chrysostom had the old log house removed to a distance of about fifty feet northwest from its original site and, minus the porch rooms and the rear lean-to addition, had it made into a guest house.⁵⁸ Over the original site of the log house Father Chrysostom built a frame church, about 75 feet long and 45 wide; the cornerstone for it was laid on April 21, 1858, and holy Mass was said in it for the first time on June 3, the feast of Corpus Christi; its interior, however, was finished and more fully furnished by Father Ulrich only in the autumn of that year. Yet this must be taken with a big grain of salt because the inside of the church was plastered only in the autumn, 1863; the beams and boarding meanwhile not only provided free ventilation from all sides but also gave easy access to rain and snow. The main expense for the construction of that church fell to the Priory, though settlers contributed some alms.

⁵⁸ J. Fl. Sondermann. *Tage-Buch*. Archives, St. Meinrad Archabbey.

To accommodate the laity, this original church was, in 1864, extended to the west, again at the expense of the Mission House, and, in 1873, a wing was added from the sanctuary northward to accommodate the increased number of students.⁵⁹ Immediately behind the altar was a small, two-storied choir; the tabernacle, resting in the center of the double altar, could be opened both from the west and



ST. MEINRAD PRIORY, 1861

Northwest View: Church; Entrance Building to Monastery; Monastery; Kitchen and Refectory; College

from the east side, a wall separating the choir from the sanctuary of the rest of the church. Throughout the week, Mass was said only in the choir, which could be heated; on Sundays and holy days, Mass was celebrated outside the choir, enabling the laity to attend.

One day, Henry Rickelmann, a pious man from the neighborhood, gave Father Chrysostom \$50; with the money he was to pro-

⁵⁹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *St. Meinrad Priory*. Draft of document to be put into the cornerstone; St. M. Ll. X, pp. 1161-1163 (Isidor to the Abbot, Jan. 6, 1859); XIII, p. 1470 (Isidor to the *Ludwig-Missionsverein*, Dec. 27, 1863); IV, pp. 449-450 (Ulrich to the Abbot, June 25, 1858; X, p. 1180 (Isidor to the Abbot, Dec. 31, 1864).

cure a carved, wooden statue of our Lady of Einsiedeln. That was Rickelmann's expression of gratitude to our Blessed Mother for a great spiritual favor he had received. This statue was, under the supervision of the Abbot, carved by a Tyrolese artist in imitation of the famous statue in the shrine of the Blessed Virgin at Einsiedeln. Upon the completion of the church it was blessed and installed over the altar on November 14, 1858; there its presence evoked devotion from many hearts as long as the church was used for divine service.⁶⁰

On November 28, 1858—the first Sunday of Advent—Father Ulrich, together with three "Latin" students, inaugurated the recitation in common of the Divine Office. The other Fathers were on the missions at the time. The Office was recited in the little house chapel, for the choir annex behind the sanctuary of the church had not yet been finished. Such was the *Solemnis Inchoatio Divini Officii* of which the Ordo annually reminds the St. Meinrad monks.

Father Isidor used to say that before the Benedictines came to St. Meinrad and began the choir service, no song birds were heard there; but that as soon as the divine praises were being chanted, the song birds came—the redbird, the thrush, and the mockingbird.⁶¹

In the spring of 1857 the Reverend Joseph Kunderk, pastor of St. Joseph Church, at Jasper, grew very sick. Feeling that he could no longer do justice to this large parish and also to Celestine, which at that time was without a priest, he wanted to resign in favor of the Benedictines; he thought his resignation would bring about the fulfillment of the promise that he had made to Einsiedeln of eventually turning his whole mission district over to the Benedictines. Father Chrysostom, however, could not take upon himself this obligation without the consent of the Abbot; besides, he had at St. Meinrad only Father Isidor, whom he needed to keep up some sort

⁶⁰ St. M. Ll. VI, p. 756 (Chrysostom to the Dean, Jan. 12, 1857); pp. 775-776 (Chrysostom to Athanasius, July 19, 1857; IV, p. 464 (Ulrich to the Abbot, Dec. 1, 1858).

⁶¹ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 461 (Ulrich to Prior Athanasius, Nov. 30, 1858); X, p. 1167 (Isidor to the same, March 2, 1859); *St. Meinrads-Raben*, Mai, 1894, p. 10.

of community life and, especially, the school. They compromised in as much as one of the Fathers on Sundays and holy days of obligation made the trip of twenty miles to Jasper and from there to Celestine to attend to those parishes.

Father Kundek died on December 4 of that year, and the Catholics at Jasper sent a delegation to Father Chrysostom to request him to provide a priest for them. Since there were two Fathers at St. Meinrad, the Bishop himself very urgently insisted that the Benedictines take over the two parishes. Much as this impaired the community life and the school, Father Chrysostom, pending the Abbot's consent, which was given subsequently, directed Father Bede to take up residence at Jasper and instructed Father Isidor to attend to the parish at Fulda, in addition to carrying on his work at St. Meinrad. The distance to Fulda was only five miles.⁶²

On March 21, 1858, the four Fathers assembled at St. Meinrad for the solemnization of the feast of St. Benedict. Realizing the handicaps under which they were working, after earnest private conversations they resolved to meet in Chapter at Ferdinand on April 12 and 13. Meanwhile each one was to give the affairs of St. Meinrad prayerful thought and commit to writing his considered opinion.

At the meeting they drew up a joint letter to the Abbot: they all agreed upon a liquidation, but they left it to the Abbot to decide whether it was to be a total or a partial one. The extent of their mission, to be defined sharply by the Abbot, was to determine the extent of the liquidation. The various likely contingencies in a total liquidation were presented and treated; once the business of such a liquidation had been transacted, the Fathers would return to Einsiedeln. However, they did not favor a total liquidation; only a partial one. In case the Abbot would decide to effect only a partial liquidation and, hence, to continue the mission, they requested the Abbot to determine more definitely what this house was to be:

whether it was to be a monastery with a school, or a mon-

⁶² St. M. LL. VI, pp. 779-782 (Chrysostom to Athanasius, Oct. 23, 1857); pp. 790-791 (Chrysostom to the Abbot, Dec. 31, 1857); IV, pp. 362-367 (Ulrich to Gall, Dec. 6, 1857), pp. 678-680 (Bede to the Abbot, Feb. 1, 1857).

astery without a school, or a school without a monastery, or a house without a monastery or a school.

This last, merely a mission house without a monastery together with a school, that is a house in which some Fathers would live and from which they would go forth to conduct missions and to which they would return again, would be the most difficult to sustain even if several places would be taken care of regularly from St. Meinrad; the revenues thus obtained would not suffice for a livelihood and recourse for contributions would have to be had to the mission societies; moreover, much lay help would have to be employed because without a monastery there could be no question of Brothers.

Father Chrysostom, who employed much time and energy in answering calls for special pastoral work, found that eventual remuneration for such extra work at times scarcely defrayed the traveling expenses.

A school without a monastery is an institute foreign to our Order and estranges the faculty from it—even though such schools may have existed and still exist; nor would such a school fully attain its purpose: on the one hand, the pupils would not receive that education of mind, heart, and character that they would receive in the monastic atmosphere; the Benedictines, on the other hand, engaged in school work outside the monastery, would become ever more estranged from their nature and purpose.—There can be no question of a monastery without a school because Einsiedeln would never obligate itself, nor promise, regularly to send Fathers or Clerics to help; and yet such a help would be necessary to keep up the monastery.

Under the impression that it was the intention of Einsiedeln to found a monastery together with a school, they petitioned that the Abbot decide upon a partial liquidation—one corresponding to the size of the debt and yet making possible the founding of a mission house, but of one in which the priests carrying on in mission and school, and the Brothers doing the manual work, would under the supervision and direction of a superior appointed by the Abbot, live according to the Rule of St. Benedict. They expressed their firm

conviction that there was no lack of spiritual forces to inaugurate in St. Meinrad

discipline and order, that is, a monastic life in the proper sense of the word; and that just this is the best and perhaps the only means to remove all that has more or less discouraged you, Right Reverend Lord Abbot, and the dear confreres at Einsiedeln and also us. . . . We therefore, secondly, petition jointly and urgently that Your Grace might give us a superior who *amore, more, ore, re* would unite our hearts in himself, who would lead us by his example, would instruct and strengthen us. And if Your Grace would add to the superior a companion, we would render you the heartiest thanks for all. Thereby you would be founding St. Meinrad anew.⁶³

In his answer to this memorandum, on May 29, the Abbot wrote that if Father Boniface Wimmer, of St. Vincent, or some other Catholic institute were willing to purchase the whole property, he would prefer a total liquidation; if that were impossible, then only a reduction, and that to the extent that the administration would no longer be so depressing a burden. For the time being he could send no help, for reasons known to them. He exhorted them with all the greater confidence to unity and charity because these virtues were pleasingly apparent in the memorandum they had sent. "For you and for me this is the happiest day in our mission history."⁶⁴

From the constantly mounting debt and from the state of religious community life at St. Meinrad, it became ever more evident that Father Chrysostom was not the man to conduct the affairs of the struggling foundation either in things material or spiritual. Fully aware of the state of affairs, he repeatedly requested the Abbot to release him from his office and he was glad when this was done, as his letters attest.⁶⁵

Perhaps the Abbot wanted to give Father Ulrich another opportunity to rehabilitate himself by saving the situation for which

⁶³ St. M. Ll. IV, pp. 446-448.

⁶⁴ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*.

⁶⁵ St. M. Ll. pp. 460-462 (Ulrich to the Abbot, Dec. 1, 1858).

he had laid the basis; the Abbot appointed him to succeed Father Chrysostom as superior, Father Isidor taking Ulrich's place as pastor at Ferdinand.

But Father Ulrich's peculiar disposition prevented him from learning by experience. With his taking over on October 9, 1858, affairs, though in the face of great difficulties that he found at hand, at once took a decided turn to the right—so in casual ways it is implicitly stated in his own letters.

He found it hard and at times impossible to answer all the calls for pastoral help coming from various rectors of churches and yet keep up community life at St. Meinrad. In passing, it might be mentioned that the refusal to comply with more such requests had been one of the complaints that Fathers Ulrich and Bede had brought against Father Jerome.

Father Ulrich had a coat of arms made in order to have a distinctive seal. Its bearings were, on a golden field, the two Einsiedeln ravens in full flight toward a ship on the blue waves, the cross of faith surmounting its mast and the anchor of hope on its deck; two sons of St. Meinrad, approaching on land, and the two ravens overhead, are about to board the ship; St. Meinrad is to become "*St. Meinradus Transmarinus*." It was a comparatively small item; yet why incur the expense when the continuance of St. Meinrad was so uncertain?⁶⁶

In January, 1859, he purchased and blessed a set of three bells; "St. Benedict," which was hung in a little tower over the monastery; "St. Michael"—popularly known as "*'s Michele*"—in a slim turret over the choir, now added to the south of the sanctuary; and "St. Henry," which in fifths or, as some claimed, in thirds, kept company with the bell hung on the willow in 1854. Father Ulrich could not at once mail the letter announcing the news, "because" so he added to his letter, "in all St. Meinrad I do not have 30 cents to pay the postage"; and yet he resented it that Einsiedeln thought it strange that a set of bells was bought when there was so much poverty.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 470 (Ulrich to the Abbot, Feb. 7, 1859).

⁶⁶ St. M. Ll. IV, p. 472 (Ulrich to the Prior [Athanasius], Feb. 22, 1859).

When Einsiedeln had been informed that Father Ulrich had fixed the date, March 21, for the religious profession of several Brother Novices and even before it had the report of the actual ceremony which at Einsiedeln would in those days have meant Solemn Profession, Father Athanasius wrote to tell him—part of the letter, as appears from its duplicate at Einsiedeln, was composed by the Abbot himself—that such a profession would be invalid because he had not obtained the necessary authorization from the Abbot and because St. Meinrad itself, not being a canonically constituted, independent Priory, could not authorize it.⁶⁸

To these observations Father Ulrich reacted in his characteristic manner. He not only claimed that his actions were justified, but he requested rather sharply that at the latest by October he be relieved of his office and be allowed either to return to Einsiedeln or to put himself at the disposal of some American Bishop.⁶⁹ But the Abbot did not comply with a request that amounted to a demand.

Father Isidor was deeply grieved over the new storm that Father Ulrich had conjured up. Though the youngest of the missionaries, Father Isidor saw that things were going from bad to worse; he also saw the reason why that was the case and what alone could save St. Meinrad. On October 24, 1859, he opened his mind in a noble, candid letter to the Abbot.

In view of the fact, he wrote, that no other way could be found to save St. Meinrad honorably than that one of the Fathers take it over on his own responsibility and then conduct affairs according to his best knowledge and his conscience; further, in view of the fact that by reason of the great disharmony among the various agents things had come to such a pass that, without a resolute and speedy intervention, in the course of things a very dishonorable end was to be feared—in fact was inevitable—with the Abbot's permission and blessing he was willing to take over St. Meinrad according to the previously mentioned plan of the Abbot. For this purpose he would con-

⁶⁸ St. M. Ll. IV, pp. 557-559 (Athanasius to Ulrich, March 15, 1859).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 475-478 (Ulrich to Athanasius, April 26, 1859; to the Abbot, June 26, 1859).

sent to have himself, together with St. Meinrad, separated from Einsiedeln, on condition, however, that the Bishop of the Diocese grant to this changed status of St. Meinrad the same agreement that he had made with Einsiedeln. Father Isidor claimed that circumstances both in the Diocese and elsewhere made this demand of exemption an indispensable condition for his offer.

If this was acceptable, the Abbot should draw up and send a legal instrument which he, Father Isidor, would sign in due form.

The taking over of the indescribably difficult business would be made remarkably easier, Father Isidor pointed out, if the Mother Monastery would continue in the friendly relations with regard to personal support and spiritual union that the Abbot had promised when he proposed that plan.

This my resolution will perhaps appear as too daring and as an expression of too great a confidence in myself or of a presumptuous confidence in God. Be that as it may, I should never be at peace if I should have to think that I had contributed to the fall of St. Meinrad by any lack of willingness on my part to make sacrifice. The acceptance or nonacceptance of the proposal I have made is entirely left to you, dearest Father.⁷⁰

Einsiedeln was highly pleased with Father Isidor's proposal; after all, it was substantially the very plan that the Abbot, writing to Father Athanasius on February 14, 1856—more than a year before Father Isidor's coming to St. Meinrad—had clearly stated and motivated and had repeated in subsequent letters, but always without success because no one, though explicitly asked, was willing to assume the responsibility. The Abbot, therefore, now promptly sent Father Isidor the forms for the necessary documents; these documents, properly signed, he was to send back to the Abbot, who would add his petition and forward all the papers to the Holy See. Prompt action on the part of the Holy See might be expected.⁷¹

⁷⁰ St. M. Ll. X, p. 1169.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 317 (the Abbot to Isidor, Oct. 11, 1859; XIII, pp. 1552-1554); St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*.

In anticipation of a favorable outcome of this action Father Ulrich by a warranty deed of November 27, 1859, transferred all the property, which was under his name, to Father Isidor.⁷²

The Bishop, however, approached both by letter and by Father Isidor in person, declined to sign a formal recommendation of the plan—a recommendation which indeed would not have been necessary but only very desirable for its success. At that time Father Bede, who was against this plan, was giving a retreat to the Seminarians at Vincennes, and the Bishop had consulted him. At Vincennes Father Isidor even had to hear an insinuation about “the rich Einsiedeln”; hence why worry about the big debt at St. Meinrad! The fact that Father Isidor experienced no feeling of sorrow in his heart at the Bishop’s refusal was for him an assurance that his motives had been unselfish.⁷³

In the beginning of 1860, Bishop de St. Palais visited St. Meinrad and joined the Fathers in a lengthy conference concerning its future. This was a rather unique procedure; moreover, the memorandum, in English, drawn up as the result of the conference, was repeatedly submitted to the Bishop for his opinion and informal approval. He thereupon wrote a recommendation, in French, which was to be an enclosure in the memorandum. The Bishop wrote that he found the spirit of the Fathers excellent and the economic status good. The future seemed hopeful “in a position perhaps unparalleled in the United States for its advantages.” He was generous in his appreciation of the work they had done so far. “Because I know the good they have done, and are still doing, I join them in requesting this favor and in giving you the assurance that St. Meinrad will cost Einsiedeln nothing and will henceforth be for you a source of consolation.”⁷⁴ On March 8, Father Ulrich sent both the memorandum and the Bishop’s recommendation to the Abbot.

The authorities at Einsiedeln were indignant over the memorandum. Father Athanasius informed Father Ulrich that it was an

⁷² St. Meinrad Archabbey archives.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1170-1171.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, II, p. 193.

affront to the Abbot inasmuch as it was practically an ultimatum; moreover, it was in English, forcing the Abbot to have it translated for him; he would answer the Bishop's letter, but not the memorandum, which even contained several mutually contradictory statements; finally, wrote Father Athanasius, the Abbot does not have the power to grant some of the concessions requested in the memorandum, nor would the Holy See, if petitioned, grant them. Such was also the Abbot's opinion.⁷⁵

Father Isidor, writing to the Abbot on May 30, explained the memorandum and the whole situation. He held that with proper co-operation St. Meinrad could well continue; however, the Abbot should send a man with full authority; he proposed Father Martin Marty, O.S.B., with one other Father as a companion, and possibly a few students for the Order. In reply, on August 20, the Abbot informed Father Ulrich that in the near future Fathers Martin and Fintan were to pay him a visit at St. Meinrad; they would by word of mouth inform him of their further task.⁷⁶

Father Martin was born in Schwyz on January 13, 1834, the son of Aloys Marty and Elizabeth Reichlin. He began his higher studies with the Jesuits, in Fribourg. After the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1848, he continued his course of studies at Einsiedeln. As a student he learned of the work of the Jesuit Father De Smet, procurator of the Jesuit missions in the Rocky Mountains, and the work of the intrepid hunter of souls aroused in the young Marty a romantic and far-reaching interest in the mission among the Indians. At Einsiedeln he eventually applied for admission into the monastery; he was solemnly professed on May 20, 1855. Ordained priest on September 14, 1856, he was put to teaching in the Gymnasium but soon was transferred to teaching moral theology.

Father Martin was tall—about five feet, ten inches—and gaunt, weighing 130 pounds; that, at least, was his weight after six years

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 561-562 (Athanasius to Ulrich, April 30, 1860); XIII, p. 1433.

⁷⁶ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *P. Isidor Hobi, O.S.B., to Abbas Henricus Schmid.*



THE *FRATRES DOMESTICI*—EINSIEDELN—1855-1856

Left to Right: 1. Isidor Hobi; 2. Fintan Mundwiler; 5. Wolfgang Schlumpf;
6. Eberhard Stadler; 10. (Standing at Right) Martin Marty

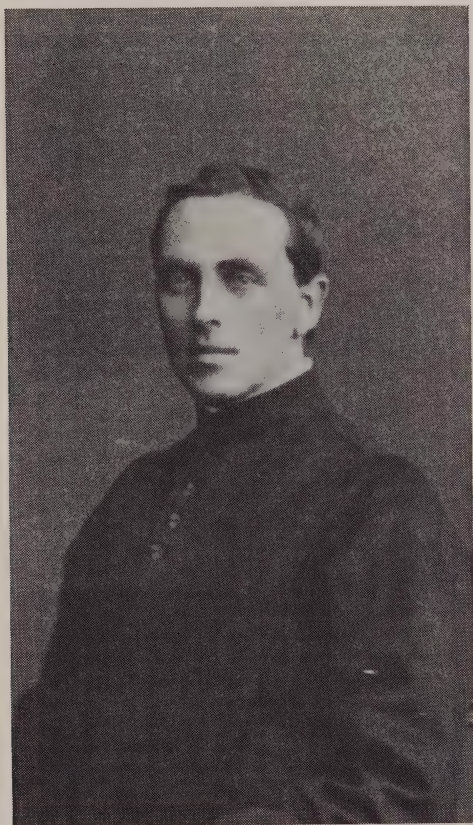
of a strenuous missionary life and a year after an almost fatal illness. His mind was sharp and his will strong and daring, tending even toward the heroic. Strict with himself, he never expected of others what he himself was not willing to do. Toward the less courageous he could be caustic. In the classroom he would crush a mischievous or negligent student with a cutting word. As a subordinate he was faithful and efficient, but as an independent religious superior his daring spirit at times led him beyond the lines of canonical demarcation—to his subsequent regret. And yet he was sincerely humble. His experiences as an Abbot and his many trials and sufferings as a Bishop considerably mellowed him. When he directed an inoffensive humorous remark once at one of his diocesan priests and the latter had retorted testily, "Bishop, I resent that," the Bishop answered, "And I beg your pardon, Father. You see, that is a birthmark of mine."

Father Martin's intellectual qualities together with his high-spirited disposition and his exact religious observance attracted the attention of his Abbot, who even then, unknown to Father Martin, had him in mind as the future Master of Novices and Instructor of Clerics. As the situation at St. Meinrad was becoming continually worse, the Abbot thought it would be a good experience for the young future official to have to take care of the foundation—either by a complete liquidation or by a thorough requickening. In either case, once his task was accomplished, he was to return to Einsiedeln and take over the office that the Abbot had in mind for him.

Father Martin's companion and helper was Father Fintan Mundwiler. Born at Dietikon, on July 12, 1835, the son of Jakob Mundwiler and Maria Seiler, he made his religious profession on October 12, 1855, and was ordained a priest on September 11, 1859. From May to August, 1860, he taught French at the monastic school.

Father Fintan was of Zacchaeus-like stature, about five feet, four inches; but he was outstanding in intellectual qualities, as both his school records and his later career show. He was possessed not only of a well-schooled mind but also of an ascetically trained will; in him the nobler affections of the heart directed the keenness of the

one and tempered the rigor of the other; he was pleasant to deal with, and even a kindly pleasantry might be expected from him at any opportune moment. His unassuming humility—all the more striking in view of his high intellectual qualities—made one at once feel at



FATHER MARTIN MARTY, O.S.B.
Administrator and Prior, 1860-1870

home in his presence. He was referred to as "the little Father Fintan," and sometimes as "the lovable Father Fintan" and, later, "the saintly Abbot Fintan." Shortly after their arrival at St. Meinrad, Father Martin wrote to the Abbot: "Father Fintan is still as he was in Einsiedeln; his disposition could not be better."

Fathers Martin and Fintan arrived at St. Meinrad on September 28, 1860.⁷⁷

During the first eighteen days of his stay at St. Meinrad, Father Martin occupied himself with gaining a knowledge of its standing in material things as well as in spiritual things. He then drew up a report of his findings and sent it to the Abbot. In the report he embodied also the results of a conference he had had with the Fathers and the Bishop.⁷⁸

On October 8, he wrote, he had set out for Vincennes to pay his respects to the Bishop. The Bishop, on his part, had heard of Father Martin's arrival at St. Meinrad and was coming south to see him. They met unintentionally at Jasper. All the other Fathers, except Father Chrysostom, who was sick, hurried to Jasper. In a joint conference, the whole situation was discussed. There were loans to the amount of \$30,993.20. Of these loans, \$950 was free of interest; for the rest, the annual interest amounted to \$2,091.77. A few items which had not been entered in the books but which turned up a little later brought the whole debt to \$31,997.75. This did not include the \$12,000 that Einsiedeln had advanced and for which, up to then, not a cent of the interest promised had been paid; besides, Father Martin found that this foreign obligation was not binding before the law because the Fathers had overlooked to have it legally recorded; he would first have to take care of that. Even apart from that obligation, a debt of practically \$32,000 was a big sum for those days and with the resources of the mission house in mind. Opposed to this total debt stood the total assets, which, estimated at the lowest, were \$37,570.

So far as any solution to the problem was concerned, Abbot Boniface, of St. Vincent, whom Abbot Henry had suggested, could not be counted upon to take over St. Meinrad; as a genuine American, he was ready to give good advice, wrote Father Martin, but as to the rest, he had enough places and debts of his own. The same held

⁷⁷ St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1434.

⁷⁸ St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1431-1441 (Martin to the Abbot, Oct. 16-23, 1860).

good for other Catholic institutes, except the Redemptorists, who, however, settled only in promising city parishes. One solution, the one that the Bishop suggested and that had been taken up in part by the Fathers even previous to Father Martin's arrival, found favor with the Fathers:

The Bishop really pledges himself to take over St. Meinrad, under his name, with the following intent: If Your Grace so wishes, he will before the law enter St. Meinrad under his name and therewith also take over the responsibility for its debts. Yet he does not want to make St. Meinrad his property; it should continue to belong to Einsiedeln, and for that reason he would at the same time also make a will in which St. Meinrad would be returned to us. In case the burden of the debt would be lifted before his death or it would otherwise be our wish that the property be returned to us, he is ready to do that at any time; he stipulates this condition only, that Einsiedeln and the Fathers of this place continue to consider and to treat the property as their own.

The Bishop also wanted the Fathers to take over St. Joseph Church at Terre Haute and to open a college there. He spoke highly of the prospects of that project. He had in the past repeatedly expressed that wish and, since the Benedictines had no man available for that work, "he had meanwhile admitted two Jesuits, though reluctantly, because here in America no priests at all [?] come forth from their colleges. These Jesuits now were withdrawing all their men to the bigger colleges" and the Bishop wished that Father Bede would at once replace them.

At St. Meinrad the school, which had been closed since May, 1858,⁷⁹ was again to be opened at the beginning of January, 1861. Father Fintan, who even then was instructing two pupils, would preside over the school as Rector.

Both the Bishop and the Fathers were of the opinion that a small town, St. Meinrad by name, should be laid out near the mission house. The sale of lots not only would be a financial gain but would also be-

⁷⁹ J. Fl. Sondermann. *Tage-Buch*.

come the nucleus of a Catholic population "by spring when St. Meinrad will be made a parish and receive permission from the Bishop to have its parish service in our monastic church until the parishioners will be able to build a church of their own, either conjointly with us or without us, as we will choose."⁸⁰ Of course, inasmuch as by that arrangement the church of the monastery was made a quasi-parochial church, it became subject, for the duration of the arrangement, to the jurisdiction and right of visitation of the Bishop—a point that he expressly insisted upon when, in 1870, St. Meinrad was to be made an exempt Abbey.

A report appearing in the *Wahrheitsfreund* acquainted the Catholic public with the intended foundation of the new town. It was officially founded on January 28, 1861, the Octave day of the thousandth anniversary feast of the death of its patron, St. Meinrad. The original plat, which ended, to the south, with Mill Street, contained only eighty lots, each measuring 100 by 150 feet. Mill Street led to the Abbey mill; it is the present Highway 62. Two later additions, to the south, the first in 1866, the second in 1876, which were in lots of 100 by 100 feet, included Brewery Street.⁸¹

A post office was established at St. Meinrad on June 21, 1862. Father Isidor was appointed the first postmaster; he held that office till 1865 when he proposed that the post office be transferred to the town.

In 1860, but previous to the arrival of Father Martin, Father Ulrich built a small brewery. He said that it was a real need for the health of the Brothers in particular, for the predominant diet of bacon demanded an accompanying drink more helpful to digestion than water. The brewery was in operation for nearly two years. The

⁸⁰ St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1436 (Martin to the Abbot, Oct. 16-23, 1860); I, pp. 31-32; III, p. 266; *Wahrheitsfreund*, XXIV (1860-1861), Jan. 10, 1861, p. 243.

⁸¹ The original plat of the town of St. Meinrad was executed by Father Isidor Hobi, O.S.B., legally acknowledged by him, on March 15, 1861, filed, on April 2, 1861, and recorded in the courthouse of Spencer County, Book No. 21, on page 401. This plat is in St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 11, folder, *St. Meinrad*.

first brew was a failure and was fed, mash and all, to the pigs, which greatly relished the change of feed. It cannot be ascertained to what extent the brewery thereafter continued operation under the management of the mission house. According to an entry in the *Journal* on August 20, 1861, the brewery was rented by Fridolin Gerster, and on April 9, 1862, the mission house sold the brewery building, together with four acres of land, to a certain Lacke, M.D., for \$350. That building still stands; it is a two-storied frame house off the northwest corner of the Fraters' recreation grounds.

This was not the first attempt at a brewery. At the beginning of 1855 Father Bede sawed lumber for a brewery to be built on the left bank of the Anderson, opposite the mills; a perennial spring at the foot of the bluff would have supplied the right sort of water. However, that building was not erected, because on June 12 of that year a short-lived prohibition law was enacted, the results of which were the forerunners of similar enactments in the days of President Wilson. Father Jerome wrote on June 26, 1855: "People who formerly drank in public now drink all the more greedily in secret."

In a second conference, with the Fathers only, Father Martin read the Statutes and enjoined exact observance of them; he demanded especially that the Fathers on missions hand in an exact financial statement at the end of each year. In that conference he also instructed the Fathers that, although for the time being he had to act as Superior of St. Meinrad, he would externally always occupy the place coming to him by reason of the time of his profession of vows; toward the public, even toward the Brothers, strict secrecy would have to be observed concerning the purpose of his mission.

The state of health of the community, so Father Martin continued in his report, had greatly improved; the sources of fever had been lessened inasmuch as the edges of the woods had been pushed farther away from the buildings and the drainage ditches in the Anderson Valley had drawn off the swamp waters.

In the house a good order of the day prevails from 4 o'clock in the morning till 8 o'clock in the evening. The

Brothers conscientiously pray in the choir the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, and we pray our office. For the time being I should not know how to make a better arrangement; and I have been greatly edified at what I have seen.

From all that I have seen and heard, the conclusion suggests itself to me that it is still possible to save St. Meinrad in the way that Your Grace has indicated, namely, through the sale of enough property to liquidate the debt either entirely or at least sufficiently to reduce it to a safe amount.

Two Fathers should always stay at St. Meinrad, continued Father Martin, both to keep up community life and to take care of the little school; in the latter work a secular priest, the Reverend Philip O'Connell, whom the Bishop had temporarily sent to St. Meinrad for his spiritual renewal, would help.

The Bishop, too, wrote an encouraging letter to the Abbot, in which he said that he had communicated his views to Father Martin. As to the debt, he wrote:

The debt, it is true, is considerable, but it is perhaps not the tenth part of that of Father Wimmer, and the value of the property can easily cover it; economy and a superior who inspires confidence and who governs well is all that is needed. I do not know of any institute which has been commenced in the United States with less difficulties.⁸²

On October 30, Father Martin, supplementing his report of October 16-23, informed the Abbot that "regarding the erection of a parish at St. Meinrad the Bishop declared that herein as well as in all else within our mission district he leaves us a completely free hand to manage according to our judgment, and that he was satisfied beforehand with all that we would do and determine."

At the same time the Bishop "urged very insistently" that, when Father Bede would be sent to Terre Haute, another Father should be sent to replace him at Jasper. This would leave only Fathers Martin and Fintan at St. Meinrad. Father Fintan conducted the school; he would on Sundays take care alternately of Fulda and Mariah Hill.

⁸² St. M. Ll. II, p. 201 (Bishop M. de St. Palais to Abbot Henry, Oct. 19, 1860).

Father O'Connell and Albert Brunet, a theologian who was waiting to be admitted into the novitiate, could help in the school.⁸³ This Albert Brunet was the later Father Benedict.

After receiving Father Martin's two communications, the Abbot praised his plenipotentiary for the manner of his procedure, but wrote that he was "truly horrified" at the financial state of affairs, especially that the instrument acknowledging the obligation of St. Meinrad to Einsiedeln to the amount of \$12,000 was now found to be of no legal value. This put the Abbot in a bad light with the Chapter and with Canon Law, inasmuch as it would seem he had loaned out that much money without looking to a proper security. As to the Bishop's offer, if he would take over the whole property both before the law and in conscience, very well; in that case, three or four of the Fathers could remain for some time to help him take care of the missions (many people had settled in the district because Benedictines were there); the rest of the Fathers would at once return to Einsiedeln. But for the Bishop to take over the property only apparently, with Einsiedeln really retaining the title and the responsibility, that would under no condition be acceptable, because at least in Europe it would be considered a deception; furthermore, under such an arrangement the credit of Einsiedeln could, absolutely speaking, be abused beyond all bounds without Einsiedeln's being able to do anything about it so far as the law of Indiana was concerned.—As to the Bishop's offer concerning Terre Haute with its "glittering prospects," the Abbot feared it would only be another case of "Send money! Send people!" Yet he was not averse to Father Bede's going there as an explorer, provided that for the time being no permanent commitments were entered into.⁸⁴

Father Bede left Jasper for Terre Haute on November 22, 1860. Father Ulrich had arrived at Jasper on the previous day to replace him. Though Father Bede to the end favored retaining Terre Haute, he soon found that the Abbot's apprehensions as to its

⁸³ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 911-913.

⁸⁴ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (Abbot Henry to Fr. Martin, Nov. 26, 1860).

"glittering prospects" were well founded. Besides the care for St. Joseph Church, there were, gradually, the parishes at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Brazil, Rockville, and Montezuma, together with a number of missions to be attended, not to mention the school to be started.

The care for St. Joseph Church always carried with it a double divine service on Sundays and Holy Days, one for the "Irish," the other for the German-speaking Catholics. During the summer vacation of 1861, Father Fintan came to Father Bede's assistance. Of the Germans, he found only about twenty families that went to church, but he was of the opinion that many more would return to the practice of the faith if a separate parish were started for them.⁸⁵

At the end of the subsequent school year at St. Meinrad, at the beginning of July, 1862, Father Martin again sent Father Fintan, the Rector of the school, to Terre Haute to recuperate during vacation and to be of some help to Father Bede. It was a postman's holiday. He soon found himself in work so deep that in September Father Martin decided to leave him at Terre Haute a little longer, while Father Martin himself took the position of Rector of the school at St. Meinrad.⁸⁶

Father Fintan organized St. Benedict parish for the German-speaking Catholics at Terre Haute. The cornerstone for the first St. Benedict Church was laid on October 2, 1864. He returned to St. Meinrad on February 19, 1865, and was again put in charge of the school;⁸⁷ but he spent the subsequent vacation again at Terre Haute and finished the church.⁸⁸ After the formal dedication during the same year, the Bishop put the church in charge of Father Caspar Doebbener, a secular priest. This made it possible for Father Fintan to return to St. Meinrad where, in September, he was again made—as Father Isidor wrote—the "kind-hearted prefect," as the Rector of the school was called at that time.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, folder, † *Fintan Mundwiler* (Fintan to the Dean, Oct. 22, 1861).

⁸⁶ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 938 (Martin to the Abbot, Sept. 24, 1862); cf. *ibid.* p. 942 (Letter, Sept. 17, 1863); p. 94 (Feb. 1, 1864).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 960; J. F. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch*. ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 955. 959.

⁸⁹ St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1199 (Isidor to Benziger Brothers, Feb. 28, 1866).

Father Bede was outspoken in his praise of his temporary young assistant.⁹⁰ And among the people of Terre Haute his name was held in loving memory: "Many of the older citizens of Terre Haute," wrote a diocesan historian in 1898, "remember the beautiful traits of character evinced by the then young priest, and how his kindness and zeal secured the love and admiration of all classes."⁹¹

Father Martin himself had gone to Terre Haute to open the school, St. Benedict College, at the beginning of October, 1863. This additional undertaking had made it necessary to send a third Father, Meinrad McCarthy, to that place.⁹² On June 1, 1864, Father Martin again journeyed to St. Meinrad.

In the autumn of 1866, St. Meinrad withdrew completely from the Terre Haute district, much to the dislike of Father Bede.⁹³

When the Bishop was asked to take over St. Meinrad unconditionally, as the Abbot had suggested, he declined to do so. That left the whole problem in the hands of Father Martin.

The feeling of insecurity and the scarcity of money that accompanied the outbreak of the Civil War, in 1861, and its duration, were not favorable to a financial rehabilitation. Though the forty lots of the new town and a good number of acres of land were sold, only a comparatively small part was paid for at once in cash; some even paid only by working for the mission house. Yet some progress was made, due in no small part to very economic management and exact bookkeeping. Even at the beginning of the year 1861, on January 1, Father Isidor wrote to the Dean of Einsiedeln:

All of us in St. Meinrad have very much reason to be grateful to the dear God, to His Blessed Mother, and to the glorious patron of our place, St. Meinrad, for the many

⁹⁰ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, file 13, folder, *Rev. Bede O'Connor* (Letter to the Dean of Einsiedeln, March 12, 1863; Feb. 2, 1864).

⁹¹ *History of Catholicity in Indiana*. Logansport, Ind., A. W. Bowen & Co. 1898. Vol. II, p. 378.

⁹² St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1469 (Martin to the Abbot, Aug. 28, 1863); p. 1470 (Isidor to the *Ludwig-Missionsverein*, Dec. 27, 1863).

⁹³ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 706 (Bede to the Abbot, Jan. 29, 1867).

graces and benefactions, as also for the notable protection and the wonderful wise providence over our institute.

And at the end of the year 1862, on December 12, he wrote to the Abbot: "Despite the impending high cost of living we face the future with confidence because our help is in the name of the Lord."

In view of the domestic and economic handicaps, the work accomplished by the few members of the mission house was all the more remarkable: an orchard and a vineyard were planted and cared for; an extensive tract of land was cultivated; the largely swampy Anderson Valley was drained; the forest was cleared; buildings were erected; community life was established; the school was conducted; and the choir recitation—though very simple—of the Divine Office was attended to. Along with all that, about twelve parishes and a number of mission stations were cared for by the six Fathers, and they complied with many requests of pastors to conduct missions, Forty Hours devotions, and Jubilee sermons and exercises. Acceptance of any one of these requests spelled hours in the pulpit and many more hours in the confessional—and an accumulation of work upon the missionary's return home. For the conducting of missions and similar parish exercises, Fathers Bede and Chrysostom were specially qualified, and they had much success. Father Martin, too, took over such exercises; his manner of preaching was more calm and matter-of-fact, yet incisive.

It was to be expected that Father Martin, once he was convinced that St. Meinrad could be saved, would also direct his attention to the reopening of the school, keeping in mind, as the objective, a Minor and a Major Seminary for the education of a native Diocesan clergy. However, for the time being there was room for only twelve students.

But in the summer of 1861—the school had opened in January—a new one-story frame building, 32 ft. by 80, was erected to house the students. This building—the "College"—stood about a hundred feet south of the present St. Placid Hall and off the east edge of the foot path leading up to the present main buildings. The building, dedicated in October, 1861, was filled to capacity because the Bishop

immediately again sent all his students to St. Meinrad; besides the the twenty-four students in this building there were three monastic students of theology.⁹⁴

Father Fintan was Rector of the school. His estimate of American students is interesting. He wrote to the Dean of Einsiedeln:

I find the American students like the European, but it seems to me that the Americans grasp things more freely



ST. MEINRAD PRIORY AND TOWN, 1862

Southwest View, Drawn by Frater Benedict Brunet, O.S.B., 1862

and hence more quickly than the European students; but in turn they want also to move around more freely and like to have long vacations. In recreation they occupy themselves partly with building a boat and partly with fowling and hunting; recently they also built for themselves a house [probably a so-called "shanty"] in the bush. This spring

⁹⁴ St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1458 (Isidor to the *Ludwig-Missionsverein*, Nov. 9, 1862); VIII, pp. 919-920 (Martin to the Abbot, Feb. 2, 1861); *ibid.*, p. 930 (Jan. 1, 1862); cf. p. 979; St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 14, Martin to Ildephons, July 16, 1866; VII, pp. 823-824 (Wolfgang to the Abbot, Oct. 12, 1866).

they have caught for themselves a number of birds of beautiful plumage. In hunting they are not very fortunate; as yet they have shot neither a deer—though one occasionally sees whole groups of deer running around—nor quails, of which there are coveys of sometimes twenty to forty. . . . Among our students are also such as want to have only a commercial course; but whence get the professors? This would demand two departments of students, two different schools. It would perhaps also not be well to have students of both sorts intermingled because one group would aspire after things secular, and the other after things spiritual. However, those who aspire only to a commercial education are the most remunerative for us because as a rule they are well-to-do, whereas those who intend to become priests are generally poor and for the most part study at the expense of the Bishop. In America the wealthy people ordinarily are merchants and do not readily allow their sons to become priests because in America priests, as missionaries, have a hard life. The wealthy Americans, however, are too comfortable, for there is no place where love of comfort is so strong as here. But the good farm people need their children for work because there are as yet not enough hands; and even if here and there they should like to have one of their sons study, they are not rich enough. That is the reason why most candidates for the priesthood study either wholly or in part at the expense of the Bishops, who must seek to obtain their money from a yearly seminary collection in the churches and from contributions of the Propagation of the Faith.⁹⁵

Sondermann records in his diary that the seminarians cut the boat, mentioned above, out of a big saw log—in those days logs of five feet in diameter were not scarce. The young mariners took their boat in triumph to the swollen Anderson and launched it; but their nautical enthusiasm was both dampened and cooled off when the boat capsized. That happened on February 6, 1862—the year was insignificant, the month and day—that is, the time of midwinter—were not.

⁹⁵ St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1454 (Fintan to the Dean of Einsiedeln, Apr. 22, 1862).

Father Isidor also could by that time write in more favorable terms about scholastic purpose and achievement at St. Meinrad than in 1857. He wrote in his report of November 7, 1862, to the *Ludwig-Missionsverein*:

Grammar, syntax, rhetoric, philosophy, and also theological sciences have been taught both to such as only now began their studies and to such as come from other institutions. The Most Reverend Bishop was now glad to be able to entrust his students . . . to an institution in his own Diocese, and we on our part regard ourselves fortunate that henceforth we are able to contribute our share to the education of a native clergy and that we have therewith achieved one of the main objectives of the foundation of our mission house.

After describing the intensiveness with which all concerned had devoted themselves to their tasks throughout the scholastic year, which lasted from September 14, 1861, to July 11, 1862, he added:

For that reason the final examinations were beyond the expectations that we and others had entertained, and we could in most branches without hesitation have placed our students alongside the better students of German institutions. Our endeavor really is to counteract the native flightiness and superficiality of the land of steam and machinery.

Though in those days and for years to come, the accommodations were very simple, the curriculum went beyond ordinary requirements. There is extant, for instance, a neatly written German manuscript of 104 pages entitled, *Somatologie gegeben von Sr. Hochwürden P. Isidor Hobi, O.S.B., 1864/1865*. This course in somatology, divided into anatomy and biology, is comprehensive, yet concise and clear—an ideal textbook for the purpose intended.

Father Martin taught five seminarians philosophy during the scholastic year 1861-1862 and, as a branch of philosophy, aesthetics too. As a text for aesthetics he used the notes that had been taken from the lectures of one of the Fathers at Einsiedeln, with the difference that Father Martin taught all the material in Latin. "The

young men," he wrote to Einsiedeln, "manifested very great interest in these first draughts of aesthetics, since nothing like that had ever come to their attention. I should be greatly mistaken if I were not the first and only professor of aesthetics on the western continent, because in all English or Latin compendiums of philosophy or programs of instruction aesthetics is not mentioned."

He also taught violin and piano, but wished that his students had a better instructor in violin. He praised the sureness and the precision with which the students sang part music.⁹⁶ On the feast of St. Meinrad, 1862, he directed the students' choir of twenty-five voices singing the four-voice *Choral Messe* by Carl Greith. On May 24, 1862, all the students went to Maria Hilf (the post office is called Mariah Hill) and sang at the High Mass, on which occasion the farmers said: "The students can sing like an organ."⁹⁷

The art of preaching, too, he taught according to a manuscript text of one of the Fathers at Einsiedeln. Nor did he neglect the art of public speaking and dramatics. Toward the end of that scholastic year he let two of the students build a stage with trees and shrubbery in the woods on the hill behind the monastery. (Was this the first "open-air theater" in the United States?) The first play, a comedy that the students put on at the end of the school year, was, *Zwei Freunde und Ein Rock*—(*Two Friends and One Coat*).⁹⁸

These successes of their pedagogic work were gratifying to the Fathers; but, so far as support for the mission house was concerned, Father Martin soon came to understand that by reason of the low charge for board and tuition, little or nothing at all might be expected from the school.

⁹⁶ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 930 (Martin to Gall (Rector), June 3, 1862).

⁹⁷ J. F. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch*, May 24, 1862.

⁹⁸ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 935-936 (Martin to a confrere at Einsiedeln, June 3, 1862); J. F. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch*, July 4, 1863. In 1885, another open-air theater was built south of the chapel yard on Monte Cassino. The tragedy, *Garcia Morenos Tod*, was staged there on May 1 and 3 of that year; it met with great popular acclaim. St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1260 (Isidor to the Dean, May 6, 1885).

The Sodality of the Blessed Virgin was introduced in St. Meinrad on June 21, 1861. On that day six students for the Order were received as sodalists. However, the charter for "the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception B.V.M., under the patronage of St. Meinrad" was issued only on May 20, 1868.⁹⁹

The Reverend Philip O'Connell, who had been a good help in the school, especially in teaching English, died on June 14, 1861. At that time a new cemetery was laid out. The remains of Father Eugene Schwerzmann, of Moritz Kempter, of Sales Kälin, and of Fridolin Kriegler († September 1, 1855) were exhumed on June 15, after Complin; those of Father Eugene were put into one box and those of the other three into another. In the forenoon of June 16, the Brothers transferred the remains of the three in the one box to the new cemetery and there buried them. After Vespers, the corpse of Father O'Connell, in its coffin, and the remains of Father Eugene, in its separate box, were taken to the new cemetery and there buried.¹⁰⁰ That cemetery was just about at the north side of the present church, except that the crest of the hill at that time was about eight feet above the present level of the hill. When the crest was to be lowered, the remains resting in that cemetery were in 1872 transferred to the present one.

The millenium of the martyrdom of St. Meinrad was inaugurated with befitting solemnity at St. Meinrad. The community, together with the students, held a novena of prayers in preparation for the feast of St. Meinrad, January 21. The neighboring parishes had been invited to take part in the celebration.

On the day itself, Matins, which formerly had usually been anticipated, were said at four o'clock in the morning—a practice

⁹⁹ First list of sodalists, July (?) 21, 1861, to June 21, 1869. (Printed leaflet, St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Sodality*). This list reads indeed "July 21," but that is evidently a printing mistake for "June 21," the feast of St. Aloysius, because by July 21 the students were on vacation. On several other years of those times the reception was on June 21; J. F. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch; The Soddalist's Leaflet. Abbey, Print.* (Perhaps in 1869. St. Meinrad Archabbey archives.)

¹⁰⁰ *Journal*, June 14, 15, 16, 1861.

that was continued thereafter. The thunderous salutes with cannons and mortars, customary on such occasions in Europe, were absent "because," so Father Fintan wrote, "we are so poor that we do not even have a sanctuary light in our church and not even candles of wax but of tallow." Prime and Tierce were sung at seven o'clock. It was a bright and mild winter day. A little after half past nine, the processions from Ferdinand and Fulda, greeted by the bells, arrived at practically the same time. They joined and were met by the community together with the students. The students wore cassock and surplice, and the procession was headed by the cross and a banner. The banner, bearing on the one side a painting of St. Meinrad and on the other side one of St. Benedict, had been made quickly for the occasion.

Singing the Litany of St. Meinrad, the community conducted the pilgrims up the hill to the church, where the *Domine Jesu* was sung. The small church could not hold all the faithful; many had to stand outside the church. Father Chrysostom had the Solemn High Mass, Fathers Isidor and Fintan assisting. Father Martin preached "an excellent sermon" on the significance of the millenium, especially for this occasion, and with what sentiments those attending should celebrate it. (Father Ulrich, who was keeping himself quite aloof from the community, was not mentioned among those attending; nor was Father Bede, but he was at Terre Haute.) A solemn *Te Deum* before the Blessed Sacrament exposed, followed by Benediction, concluded the service, whereupon the pilgrims were again formally conducted to the limits of the monastery grounds. It was half past twelve. That afternoon the monks celebrated Solemn Vespers, after which they sang the Einsiedeln four-part *Salve Regina* before the image of the Blessed Virgin.

During the Octave the community made its spiritual retreat, and on each day there was a special sermon on some phase or virtue of the life of St. Meinrad. On the Octave day itself, the parishioners of Maria Hilf came in procession. The Ferdinand brass band and many other people also came for the occasion.

There was a special reason for the presence of the brass band

and of many people on that day. It had been announced that that day was to mark the official founding of the town of St. Meinrad and the auctioneering of the lots. Michael Spaeth, from Maria Hilf, did the auctioneering, and he did it gratis for the mission house.¹⁰¹

Michael Spaeth, it might be mentioned, was an auctioneer whose services were much sought in these parts. It was his custom, when his voice would show signs of weakening in his fatiguing work to strengthen it with a little spirituous drink. Once he was to leave early for an auction many miles distant. Before going to bed the previous evening, he put a bottle of applejack on the kitchen table. Arising very early in the morning, he took what was on the table and went his way. When he raised the bottle to his mouth during his work, his discerning tongue found water; and his nose bespake no better. He made the best of the situation, yet resolved to demand an account from his wife upon his return home. It turned out that, after he had retired on the previous evening, his wife had entered the kitchen with a bottle of holy water, which she placed alongside the bottle containing applejack. (In size, shape, and color, the two bottles were identical.) Having finished her work, she inadvertently but reverently had taken the wrong bottle—and so had he.

Upon the Bishop's invitation Father Martin attended, as the Bishop's theologian, the provincial Synod of Cincinnati from April 28 to May 5, 1861; he did so all the more readily in the hope that it would enable him to become better acquainted with the native ecclesiastical life and to make St. Meinrad and its work better known.¹⁰²

The many difficulties arising during the first nine years of St. Meinrad were a challenge to the Fathers. With rare exception they took up the challenge with a firm trust in God and with a courageous devotedness to what they considered a noble cause. The words that on July 16, 1861, Father Martin wrote to the Abbot are expressive of the sentiments of the community:

True, the letters from Einsiedeln still speak with little

¹⁰¹ St. M. Ll. IX, pp. 1050-1051 (Fintan to the Dean of Einsiedeln, Jan. 30, 1861).

¹⁰² St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 921-922.

confidence of the future of St. Meinrad; and there are indeed many and good reasons for that attitude. But it seems to me that if God did not intend to preserve and use St. Meinrad, He would long ago have had occasion to drop it. So much good has been accomplished, so much sacrifice made, so much work done, and so much hardship endured that, after all, the blessing of God will surely come, preserve St. Meinrad, slowly and quietly further it, and make it into what obedience should have made of it in its very beginning.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 924.

CHAPTER VI

NEW LIFE

ABBOT HENRY had sent Father Martin with orders to dispose of all the property at St. Meinrad in case he came to the conclusion that the mission house could not survive; but if he judged that it could survive, he was to reorganize it both economically and administratively. In either case, his mission accomplished, he was to return to Einsiedeln.

When a close inspection of the affairs of the mission house had convinced Father Martin that St. Meinrad was viable on the basis of a partial reduction of its holdings, he applied himself energetically to the accomplishment of that objective, even though he soon found that it would be a protracted and painstaking task; yet, the hard times during the Civil War notwithstanding, St. Meinrad did somewhat better financially than merely hold its own. That was not because of the occasional trickle of financial help that came from the one or the other mission society; rather, it was the result of a careful management and of a progressively improving monastic community life of prayer and work. Father Martin gave voice to a truism when, on May 3, 1862, he wrote to the Abbot: "I see ever better that we Benedictines should and can help ourselves, not by begging, but by working and by God's blessing obtained through prayer."¹

Intent at the same time upon putting St. Meinrad upon a better administrative footing, Father Martin, after obtaining the Abbot's consent, recalled Father Isidor from the pastorate at Ferdinand in

¹ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 934.

April, 1861, to groom him as the Superior who would take over after his own return to Einsiedeln. In the eyes of the public, even to the knowledge of the Brothers, Father Isidor was the superior, while Father Martin merely had the place due him according to the seniority based upon his time of religious profession; but in the official meetings of the Fathers and in the internal forum, Father Martin acted with full authority—and that trenchantly. This arrangement attracted no public attention since Father Isidor, who for that purpose had taken out citizenship papers, was the legal owner of all the property.²

Father Martin gave his reasons for this arrangement when on October 21, 1862, he gave the Abbot an account of some official transaction on this basis:

Your Grace already had designated Father Isidor as my successor and had directed me so to arrange all things that I could depart at any moment, without my departure causing any disturbance or harm. To this effect it seemed best to me so to select my position that I should take the part of the prompter behind the scenes, something that I could eventually continue even in Europe. It seemed to me that in this manner an end was made, at the earliest possible time, of the instability in all things, and of the incessant provisional arrangements. And till now, the measure really has proved to be the best means of procuring order and regularity within the house and confidence on the part of those outside, and to such an extent that now all things have taken on an ever increasingly firm appearance. The everlasting tearing down and rebuilding, the saying and gainsaying, the errors in bookkeeping and in a hundred other things of this sort are done away with once for all.

This, then, seems to me to be also the most suitable way for instructing Father Isidor for his future position; he thus could learn more and I could observe him better. Further, I was of the opinion that therewith I could best pave the way for subordination to Father Isidor on the part of the older

² St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1439 (Martin to the Abbot, Oct. 11, 1860); VIII, p. 920 (the same, Feb. 2, 1861); p. 931 (the same, Jan. 1, 1862); St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot to Martin, June 12, 1861; Feb. 19, 1862).

confreres if in public I myself am the example of it. Upon the whole, the example of my resignation seemed to me to be necessary because in the final analysis the beginning of all the evils and sorrows was ambition for this office as an *abbas nasciturus*, as Father Ulrich expressed himself. One should indeed not believe that such a position could awaken ambition, yet everything has come forth from this source, as I have seen ever more clearly; if that ceases, then unity and God's blessing is gained.—Finally, there also were personal reasons: first, because in several regards I considered Father Isidor better suited and, secondly, because in this manner I hoped to work for St. Meinrad with purer intention and better blessing. If I were at the head, I would be active for my own honor and would be too anxiously concerned about success; but this way I work for God alone; everything is put into His hands, and, even if I were to stay in America all my life, I should in my own interest and, as it seems to me, in the interest of the undertaking not wish for myself a position different from the one that I now occupy.³

The Abbot was disappointed at being informed that Father Martin's stay at St. Meinrad would have to be prolonged; he had expected to have him back by Easter or Pentecost, 1861, and to appoint him the Master of the Frater Novices and the Instructor of the Fraters; yet, as another token of his interest in St. Meinrad, he consented that Father Martin prolong his stay there.⁴

During the first three years of this arrangement Father Isidor was superior only in the mission house itself, but in July, 1864, Father Martin also entrusted him with the care, as superior, of all the missions that St. Meinrad attended.⁵

Reasonably satisfied that the rectified economic situation would constitute a sufficiently secure material basis for the continuance of the mission house and that an effective administration could be established, Father Martin's next objective was to secure the necessary

³ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 93.

⁴ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot to Martin, March 21, 1861).

⁵ St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1195 (Isidor to the Abbot, Feb. 6, 1865).

increase of personnel from within. To that effect he reminded the Abbot of his repeatedly expressed intention of laying the foundation for a new monastery during the millenary celebration, in 1861, of the death of St. Meinrad. The opportunity was at hand. He requested the Abbot's permission to admit to Simple Temporary Vows, under the stipulations laid down in the *Statutes*, three Brother Novices, Jacob Weiss, George Zeiler, and Francis Haeusler, and to give the habit to three Brother Candidates, Joseph Anton Graf, from St. Gallen, Switzerland, Andrew Andhofer, from St. Mary's, Illinois, and Matthew Hug, from Umkirch, Baden. Further, Father Martin recommended that two theologians be admitted to the Novitiate, eventually to the profession of Vows, and in due time to ordination, *sub titulo missionis*. He was of the opinion that one might be ordained under this arrangement provided the Bishop consented to accept one so ordained into his Diocese in case St. Meinrad would be discontinued. These two theologians were Albert Brunet, from Saint-Denis, France, and Alois (Patrick Joseph) McCarthy; the latter, a native of Monmouthshire, South Wales, had first been at St. Vincent Abbey, Pennsylvania.⁶

The Abbot granted the permission requested for the profession of Vows, yet took care again to stress the stipulations laid down in the *Statutes* that he formerly had sent.⁷

The Bishop must have felt satisfied as to the canonical requirements, because on October 2, 1861, at St. Meinrad, he gave Tonsure and Minor Orders to the two Frater Candidates, Albert Brunet and Alois (Patrick Joseph) McCarthy.⁸ That was the first ordination at St. Meinrad.

On November 11, of that year, Father Martin informed the Abbot: "We now have three theologians, who next year will be ripe for ordination to the priesthood and who are possessed of the

⁶ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot to Martin, Sept. 10, 1861).

⁷ L. c.

⁸ J. Fl. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch*, Oct. 2, 1861.

best spirit. Therefore, acting on your Lordship's letter, on October 12 I allowed them to be invested as Novices, and with them two Brother Candidates, Brother Andrew Andhofer, from Illinois, and Brother Joseph Anton Graf from St. Gallen."⁹ (Father Martin had meanwhile transferred Matthew Hug from the Brothers to the theologians.) He continued:

On October 13 [*Translatio S. Meinradi*], for the concluding festivity of the millenary, two of the Novices—whom I wrote about the last time to your Lordship—the third, George Zeiler, has meanwhile gone to the Trappists—have made their Simple Vows, namely Brother Alexander (formerly Jacob) Weiss and Brother Meinrad (formerly Francis) Haeusler, both belonging to the seven immigrant Suabians of seven years ago. . . . Herewith, now, the scandal that Father Ulrich caused with his profession is undone, for, although this [present] profession of Vows took place entirely in the quiet of the early Mass, it has nevertheless become known and has made all the better an impression. At the same time it seemed to me that this was the fulfillment of that promise that you had made years ago, namely, that on the occasion of the millenary you would lay the foundation stone for a monastery. This foundation stone can indeed be none other than the holy vows; and if they have been pronounced in the stillness and the darkness of the morning, it is to be kept in mind that it is the very destination of a foundation stone, in the depth of the earth, unseen and unadorned, to carry the building that will gradually, in the course of years, rise over it. And so we may in this as well as in other points already indicated consider ourselves fortunate if the good Lord compels us to hold to that way which St. Augustine indicates: "*Magnam fabricam vis construere celsitudinis, de fundamento prius cogita humilitatis.*" The first generation may likely not succeed in getting beyond this *fundamentum*, but for all that, our successors will build all the more securely and loftily.¹⁰

⁹ J. Fl. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch*, assigns this event to Oct. 11.

¹⁰ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 926-927 (Martin to the Abbot, Nov. 11, 1861).

The Abbot expressed his deep gratification over what he styled "the first *actus professionis* of the new Meinrad's Cell."¹¹

Father Martin indeed thought that "the scandal" of Father Ulrich's unauthorized admission to monastic Vows had now been undone. That, however, was only partially the case. Two pastors of the seven Suabians on November 13, 1861, conjointly wrote a rather sharp letter to the Abbot. They said that three—among them was George Walser, one of those who had been professed by Father Ulrich—had complained that, when after seven years their earnest request to be admitted to the vows had finally been granted, "there came a pair of young Fathers who declared the Vows invalid and the investing unauthorized; instead of receiving thanks and paternal treatment the Brothers [?] were told, 'even if they served still another seven years, it would be questionable whether they would be given the habit.'"

The Abbot answered that he indeed knew of the fact that a profession of Vows of the previous year had been declared invalid; the decision was, however, not an arbitrary act but one of strict duty because the necessary authorization from the competent superior had not been obtained for accepting the profession, since the Institute itself had as yet no independent canonical status. For this reason one was under obligation to call their attention to this circumstance lest one incur the ecclesiastical censures imposed in such cases. The Abbot went on to point out the special difficulties, including the disturbances caused by the war, that up till then had stood in the way of making St. Meinrad a canonically independent institute.

One of the complainants—whose own interest should have counseled silence—was befriended after his departure from the mission house by Father Ulrich; it was Father Ulrich who had composed for him the letter that was sent to the two pastors in Württemberg; to him Father Ulrich also gave his savings that he should have sent to his superior at St. Meinrad.¹² When the Abbot sent Fa-

¹¹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (to Martin, (Jan. 21, 1862).

¹² St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 933 (Martin to the Abbot, May 3, 1862; cf. p. 932 Dec. 13, 1861).



THE CHURCH, 1858

Extension Westward and Tower, 1862; Addition Northward, 1873; Demolished in 1948 after it had ceased to serve its purpose as church.

ther Martin a copy of this correspondence, the latter replied: "As regards those Suabians who have taken their leave, I should not like to annoy your Lordship with a narrative of events; but I should only wish that the pastors would really address themselves to me, whereupon they would have to beg your Lordship's pardon—and they would really do so—for the facts that I should have to communicate to them would be of such a nature."¹³

The admission of vows of such as aspired to the priesthood was more complicated by reason of the title required by canon law. They could be admitted to Simple Vows to last as long as St. Meinrad would exist and be able to give them subsistence; but this *titulus paupertatis*, since it was qualified as to time, could not serve as a title required for ordination. However, at the request of the Fathers the Bishop consented in writing to ordain the Fraters *ad titulum missionis* and to accept them into his Diocese if St. Meinrad were to close its doors and if they would be in good standing; until thus accepted, they would be barred from clerical functions.

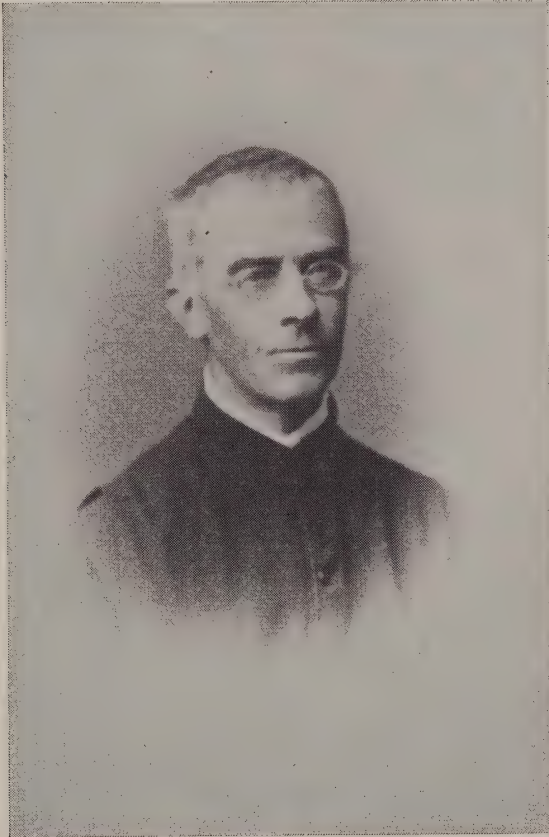
Accordingly, with the Abbot's authorization, Father Martin on December 8, 1862, admitted the Novices, already ordained to Minor Orders, to Simple Religious Profession under the conditions laid down in the *Statutes*: the newly professed were Benedict Brunet, Meinrad Maria McCarthy, and Henry Hug. The latter, together with a Novice (Joseph—after his profession, Fidelis—Maute), received Minor Orders on January 23, 1863. Brunet, McCarthy, and Hug were ordained Subdeacons on the 24th; Deacons on the 25th; and Priests on the 26th, 1863. These were the first priests ordained for and at St. Meinrad.¹⁴ This was the pattern for the admission to the Pro-

¹³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot to Martin, Dec. 13, 1861, together with a copy of the letter of the two pastors, Nov. 13, 1861, and of the Abbot's reply to them, Dec. 12, 1861); St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 932 (Martin to the Abbot, Jan. 21, 1862; cf. p. 933 (May 3, 1862)).

¹⁴ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 927 (Martin to the Abbot, Nov. 11, 1861); pp. 932, 934 (May 3, 1862); p. 937 (Sept. 24, 1862); p. 940 (Dec. 12, 1862; St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*, (the Abbot to

fession of Vows and to Ordination so long as St. Meinrad remained under the jurisdiction of the Abbot of Einsiedeln.

One of the two Brother Candidates, Andrew Andhofer, a promising young man of 23 years of age, suffered from illness a long time.



FATHER WOLFGANG SCHLUMPF, O.S.B.

He died a saintly death on March 2, 1861. "He had led a saintly life and had edified all by his great humility and piety."¹⁵

The personnel at St. Meinrad received another welcome increase from without in the person of Father Wolfgang Schlumpf,

Martin, Dec. 13, 1861; Feb. 19, 1862; Aug. 15, 1862); J. Fl. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch; Wahrheitsfreund*, Feb. 2, 1863, p. 305.

¹⁵ J. Fl. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch*, March 2, 1862.

O.S.B. Born on January 20, 1831, he made his religious profession at Einsiedeln on September 25, 1853, and was ordained a priest on September 13, 1857. For two years he had been Second Master of Ceremonies and for four years teacher in the Gymnasium. He volunteered to go to St. Meinrad; he arrived there on November 20, 1862. At first employed in pastoral work, he took over the farm and the building activity together with the Office of Instructor of the Brothers. This was in July, 1865.¹⁶ Father Wolfgang was an exemplary priest and religious and a willing and unselfish worker; but more technical knowledge would have served him well in the performance of some of the duties imposed upon him.

Father Martin had another painful task as to personnel on hand in Father Ulrich. The latter's habitual lack of co-operation with his confreres, even with his superiors, except on his own terms, was bound eventually to end unhappily.

As early as December 11, 1856, Father Chrysostom had reported to the Abbot that Father Ulrich had not co-operated with anyone who had been appointed Superior; that his unfair criticism often had lessened their influence; that he had always been the cause of the strained relation between Einsiedeln and St. Meinrad; and that that situation would continue as long as Father Ulrich would be connected with the mission house.¹⁷

In his reply the Abbot acknowledged that Father Ulrich had been a factor retarding the progress of St. Meinrad, and that he had given up hope for improvement in this confrere who "sees the speck in the eyes of his brethren, and yet does not see the beam in his own. I should long ago have used 'the sword of separation,' but I have no substitute."¹⁸ (At that time Fathers Athanasius and Jerome had returned to Einsiedeln, and there remained at the mission house itself only Fathers Chrysostom and Isidor.)

When informed that his unauthorized admission of the Brother Oblates to religious profession of Vows was invalid, Father Ulrich,

¹⁶ P. R. Henggeler, *Professbuch*, III, p. 550, n. 611.

¹⁷ St. M. Ll. VI, pp. 751-752.

¹⁸ St. M. Ll. III, pp. 301-303 (the Abbot to Chrysostom, Jan. 27, 1857).

from November 21, 1860, at St. Joseph Church, Jasper, broke off all connection with St. Meinrad. When on March 29, 1862, Father Martin visited him to bring about an understanding, Father Ulrich told him very pointedly that he, Father Ulrich, no longer belonged to St. Meinrad and that he wanted neither to hear nor to know anything about Father Martin. He even worked against St. Meinrad inasmuch as he told some of its creditors that, if they wanted to save their money, they should demand it soon because St. Meinrad was about to break up. This maneuver did not succeed because, though some few called for their money, more came unsolicited and offered loans at fair terms.

As his own entries show, Father Ulrich did not send to his superior at St. Meinrad such revenues as St. Meinrad was entitled to receive from him; personally frugal, he instead used those revenues for the parish or for other purposes of his choice. He had done the same during his pastorate at Ferdinand where, according to his own Journal, he ultimately gave "\$1,200 to the parish, which certainly did not need such a contribution, meanwhile allowing St. Meinrad to go deeper into debt."¹⁹ In his letter of December 11, 1856, Father Chrysostom even had written the Abbot: "A trustee of the church at Ferdinand has said positively that within three years Father Ulrich donated \$2,000 to the church at Ferdinand."

As Father Ulrich's attitude became ever more pronounced, his confreres at St. Meinrad, deeply concerned over him, privately made in his behalf a Novena of Nine Tuesdays in honor of St. Benedict.²⁰ These prayers were not in vain, though they seemed to be so at that time; Father Ulrich would first have to taste the tart fruit of his independent zeal, so that in God's own time His grace would be welcomed.

Under date of January 1, 1861, Father Martin had sent to the *Annalen der Glaubensverbreitung*, Strasbourg,²¹ a *Résumé of the*

¹⁹ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 934 (Martin to the Abbot, May 3, 1862).

²⁰ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 932-954 (Martin to the Abbot, Jan. 21, 1862; Aug. 5, 1862); VI, pp. 751-752 (Chrysostom to the Abbot, Dec. 11, 1856).

²¹ Vol. XXXIII, pp. 428-438; cf. St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1447-1452.

Eight Years of the Mission Founded by the Benedictine Fathers in the State of Indiana. . . . It was a factual narrative, impressive in its noble simplicity. After reading it, Father Ulrich published in the *Wahrheitsfreund*, Cincinnati, an extensive though insipid rebuttal. He signed the three articles only as "*Wächter an der Alb.*"²²

By 1862, the Bishop wrote to Father Martin that, if Father Ulrich would not work with St. Meinrad, he ought to be recalled to Einsiedeln because no place within the Diocese would remove him far enough from the mission house; he could always have recourse to the newspapers, and his enterprising spirit would scarcely find rest. Father Martin, too, counseled his recall.²³

Later, when the Abbot had ordered Father Martin to send him a faithful report of the storm that Father Ulrich had brought upon himself at Jasper, Father Martin wrote:

He now was at all times a thorn in the eyes of the Bishop who, to start with, no special friend of the religious priests, has no use at all for irregular regulars. Now, then, Father Ulrich had the imprudence of attempting what he had done against us also against the Sisters of Providence, whose Superior and Patron the Bishop himself is; and therewith he filled up his measure with the Bishop. Those Sisters had the girls' school in his parish and last winter asked for a higher salary on account of the hard times. This raise was readily granted in other parishes. Not so with Father Ulrich. On the following Sunday he ascended the pulpit and thundered against the greed of Religious and of the Bishop who battered upon the fat of the poor people, and so forth. As I understand Father Ulrich, the sermon was directed rather toward us than the Sisters and this was for him only the welcome occasion to condemn us at least indirectly. Thereupon the Sisters complained to the Bishop, and Father Ulrich on his part sent a parish deputation to him to complain against the Sisters. The Bishop by letter reprimanded Father Ulrich, who, however, both in the pulpit and still more in private conversation spoke disparagingly both of the Sisters as not sufficiently qualified as teachers,

²² May 21, p. 473; May 28, p. 485; June 4, 1862, p. 497.

²³ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 937-939 (Martin to the Abbot, Sept. 24, 1862).

and of the Bishop. Thereupon the Sisters were recalled by their superioress.²⁴

The deputation just mentioned, consisting of the parish "trustees," presented to the Bishop the form of document that had been prepared for his signature. Inasmuch as that document would have deprived the Ordinary of the Diocese of an ecclesiastical right the Bishop curtly refused to sign it.

Upon the return of the deputation to Jasper, a linguistically clumsy, though deferential, petition was sent to the Bishop, in which the petitioners expressed the fear that their pastor, who "had fully discharged his duties," was to be removed on account of the departure of the Sisters. "If we are left our choice, we will all the time prefer the Pastor to the Sisters. If either must be removed, then let it be the Sisters. We would kindly receive the Sisters from Oldenburg if sent, but we desire to have such as are qualified to teach." The petitioners protested that they were motivated by their responsibility for the Catholic education of their children.²⁵

In an "appendix" to this petition "the committee complained," so the Bishop wrote to Father Ulrich, "that I treated them rashly. They would surely not have used that expression, had they understood the meaning of it." (The German petitioners, poor English linguists, very likely had in mind the German word *rasch*—"quickly," "curtly"—which word, transliterated into English, took on the unpleasant connotation of "inconsiderately." In reality, the Bishop had acted curtly with them, but not inconsiderately.) The Bishop continued: "I came to the conclusion that you would serve much better the interests of religion and those of your soul by returning to your community. You may, then, make preparations to that effect. . . . Since you cannot live in peace with your religious Brothers and cooperate with them

²⁴ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 954 (Martin to the Abbot, Aug. 5. 1865).

²⁵ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1293. At that time there was also at Ferdinand a complaint about the teaching of one of the Sisters of the same Institute. The people demanded that she teach "according to law"—that is, according to public school regulations. Cf. Albert Kleber, O.S.B., *Ferdinand, Indiana, 1840-1940*. p. 123.

for the good of your Order, I can expect but very little from your cooperation for the good and peace of my Diocese."²⁶

In his reply, Father Ulrich wrote that he had expected "this catastrophe" for some time and that his conscience assured him that his guiding motives had been good all along. He went on to say that he thanked God a thousand times, "Who had terminated his missionary career in America with such a dismissal; his heavenly reward would not be diminished. He reminded the Bishop that they both would have to appear before the one Judge who on the footing of truth would carefully investigate everything that the Bishop had left uninvestigated."²⁷

On Sunday, January 29, 1865, there was a procession at Jasper. Father Ulrich preached a farewell sermon and blessed the congregation. Father Meister, the pastor at Celestine, then imparted to him a solemn blessing.²⁸

In his departure from Jasper for Einsiedeln, Father Ulrich did not call at St. Meinrad; but at Cincinnati he handed the *Wahrheitsfreund* an open farewell letter to the parishes of Jasper, Ferdinand, and Maria Hilf (Mariah Hill), as also of the "dear neighbors, Fulda, St. Anthony, and Celestine, who honored me as their Father and Counselor." He recalled to memory his work among them and their faithful co-operation with him and—so he fondly thought—their affectionate devotedness to him. "Could we find it strange that the demon of pride and envy has suddenly, yet only after years of strenuous endeavor, brought about a painful separation?" Even from Switzerland he continued for some time to write in this vein to several persons in Jasper.²⁹

And so this energetic and capable but self-willed man experienced the frustration of all his work. So it seemed to him, and so

²⁶ St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1295 (the Bishop to Ulrich, Jan. 18, 1865).

²⁷ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 961-962 (Ulrich to the Bishop, Jan. 29, 1865).

²⁸ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 962 (the Bishop to Martin, Feb. 3, 1865); J. Fl. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch*, Jan. 31, 1865.

²⁹ *Wahrheitsfreund*, Feb. 15, 1865; St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1196 (Isidor to the Abbot, July 9, 1865); St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot to Marty, May 25, 1866).

it seemed to others. He died six years later, on May 31, 1871. But the prayers made by his confreres to St. Benedict had not been in vain. On July 2 the Abbot wrote to Father Bede: "For the last years he not only repentantly acknowledged his errors but as much as possible also made amends for them."³⁰

Father Bede, too, caused Father Martin some concern: on the one hand, his gradually increasing hardness of hearing became a handicap in pastoral work; on the other hand, about thirteen years of pioneer mission life, coupled with his naturally easy-going disposition, had tended to make monastic life within the cloister rather difficult for him. Later, in 1875, after hearing of Abbot Henry's death, Father Bede himself wrote ruefully: "I can never forget that in former years I, guided by a false zeal, have hurt his paternal heart so much."³¹

In 1865, the Bishop, recognizing Father Bede's special qualities for the position, wanted to make him his Chancellor, but for the time being he refrained from doing so because—so Father Martin wrote to Father Bede—the Very Reverend John Corbe, the Vicar General, "opposed it more strenuously than anyone of us could have done."³² Father Corbe's opposition to Father Bede's appointment makes one think of the alarm that some of the French clergy had occasionally taken in regard to their German-speaking confreres; and Father Bede, though of Irish birth, had acquired a Swiss-German culture. Yet, with the consent of Father Martin, the Bishop did, in 1866, make the appointment.

St. Meinrad had, in May, 1865, decided to withdraw gradually from the Terre Haute district. On November 22, 1866, Father Bede took up residence in the Bishop's house at Vincennes to devote himself exclusively to his office as Chancellor, to which task the Bishop soon

³⁰ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot to Bede, July 2, 1871).

³¹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 13, letters of Father Bede (to the Dean, Feb. 8, 1875).

³² St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 952 (Martin to Bede, Feb. 15, 1865); pp. 953-954 (the same, Aug. 5, 1865).

added that of Diocesan Consultor, Confidential Counselor, and general troubleman throughout the diocese. Father Bede's genial disposition and diplomatic talent, together with his experience as Assistant Archivist at Einsiedeln and his years of personal acquaintance with pastoral work, qualified him well for his new position; he even became a favorite with the Diocesan clergy in general. He was the first Chancellor the Diocese had ever had. For this reason, and because there was no Secretary, he found the work both absorbing and wearying; but he wrote: "When I am tired and want to have some recreation, I go on the missions and preach and hear confessions for a week or two."³³ In 1867, in spite of the demands made on his time by his work as Chancellor, he gave twelve missions for the people, conducted the retreat for the Seminarians and the students at St. Meinrad, accompanied the Bishop on his Confirmation tours, and went with him to the dedication of churches, the blessing of bells, and the laying of cornerstones. On such occasions he always had to preach. Over and above, when at home, he preached regularly on Sunday at the High Mass in the Cathedral.

In Vincennes he soon became aware of a widespread religious indifference, which at times even ended in apostasy. Convinced that the lack of Catholic schools for boys contributed strongly to that state of affairs—the girls in general were taken care of by St. Rose Academy—he insisted that two schools be erected in Vincennes, one at the Cathedral, the other at St. John Church.

The Rector of the Cathedral, Father Audran, was unable to realize—though he was a zealous priest—that the lack of Catholic education at Vincennes was the cause of the religious stagnation. Father Audran therefore opposed the project. At first the Bishop, too, was reluctant to enter upon it. But Father Bede insisted, even threatening that he would preach no more in the Cathedral if such schools were not started, because the lack of schools would frustrate the good that sermons might accomplish. By reason of this insistence the

³³ St. M. LL. VIII, p. 967 (Martin to the Abbot, Oct. 17, 1866); V, p. 706 (Bede to the Abbot, Jan. 29, 1867); XII, p. 1503 (the same, Sept. 7, 1871).

hitherto cordial relation between Father Bede and the Bishop came near the breaking point in November, 1868.

Eventually, however, the Bishop decided that the two schools should be built. On December 3, the Bishop transferred Father Audran to St. Augustine Church, Jeffersonville. Without appointing a new Rector, the Bishop simply made Father Bede his First Assistant. At the same time the Bishop commissioned Father Bede to raise funds for the building of a school at St. John Church. The Bishop himself would provide for the building of a school at the Cathedral.³⁴

On February 2, 1872, the Bishop issued his Lenten pastoral letter. In length, contents, and style, it differed largely from the Bishop's usual pastorals inasmuch as it contained a forceful plea for a Catholic school and pointed out the obligation of parents, even under the threat of excommunication, to send their children to a Catholic school. To encourage the Catholics, who by their taxes had to support the public schools, schools from which their conscience did not permit them to derive any benefit, the letter pointed to the even greater sacrifices the Catholics in Ireland had made under similar conditions to safeguard the spiritual welfare of their children: the Irish (in all their poverty) would not send their children to the government school even though they were compelled to support those schools by their taxes. The whole argument, especially the pointing to the example of the Catholics of Ireland, suggests that Father Bede, of Irish descent and a versatile writer, was the ghost writer of at least four-fifths of that pastoral letter.³⁵

³⁴ St. M. Ll. V, p. 710 (Bede to the Abbot, March 6, 1869).

³⁵ In this connection it is of interest to record the following correspondence between the Reverend Joseph A. Thie and the Very Reverend Anthony Scheidler, Vicar General. This correspondence is preserved in the archives of St. Meinrad Archabbey. On July 3, 1907, Father Thie wrote to Father Scheidler: "Yesterday I heard the following from a priest of our Diocese: 'When the German priests in our Diocese began to introduce parish schools, the Bishop was asked for permission, and this was at first denied.' Did the German priests request this permission in a body? . . . In what year was that? The same priest said further: 'Later the priests received the permission to introduce parish schools tentatively.' Are these statements based on truth?" Father

Father Bede also applied himself to having the interior of the Cathedral remodeled and painted so that it became, as he was fond of saying, "a perfect gem."

In his pastoral letter dated October 11, 1869, the Bishop announced that he had made Father Bede Vicar General of the Diocese, an office which, together with his other diocesan works, he retained to the end of his life.

On Sunday, September 19, 1875, Father Bede attended the laying of the cornerstone of the combined Sacred Heart Church, school, and rectory building of the Franciscans at Indianapolis. On that occasion he preached three long sermons: one in the morning at a church in Indianapolis, and two—an English sermon and another in

Scheidler answered, on July 5: "I do not know whether priests requested that permission in a body nor how many asked in individual cases. But I do know—for I was present—that at my first retreat, in September, 1861, at Vincennes, Father Smarius, S.J., at the direction of the Bishop informed us German priests that it was not only imprudent but presumptuous and foolhardy to found parish schools and put up buildings, because we would never be able to keep them up or to raise them to the level of the free schools. The consequence of this fulminatory admonition was that several German priests resolved to work now more than ever for parish schools. In the eastern part of the Diocese Father Rudolf, Sr., Weinzoepfel, and I did that; some did the same in the southern part. Our Bishop of blessed memory, Maurice de St. Palais, meaning well and being zealous, began to make observations and to ponder over the important affair, and two years later the same Father Smarius, S.J., informed us at the retreat that the Most Reverend Bishop, as well as he himself, had completely changed his mind and that he encouraged all priests to erect parish schools. Later the Most Reverend Bishop in a pastoral letter"—Father Scheidler must have had in mind the one of February 2, 1872, spoken of above—"again encouraged to do that and gave the priests the right to refuse absolution to those parents who, where they could, refused to send their children to the parish schools. The result was that above all the Dioceses in the United States the Diocese of Vincennes soon took the first place as pattern and model for parish schools. I regret that we have lost this honor."—The circular in which the Bishop announced the first retreat states that the Reverend Damen, S.J., was to conduct it. Either the plan with regard to who was to conduct the retreat was changed or Father Scheidler was mistaken about the name of the retreat master; yet this does not affect the substance of the correspondence.

German—in the afternoon, at the ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone. This labor was, for him, just part of an ordinary day's work.

After the services a fever seized him, yet on Tuesday he started on his journey to Vincennes. Arrived at Terre Haute, he became alarmed at his condition and stopped there to put himself under medical care. All to no avail. He died on Saturday, September 25, 1875, at the age of 49 years, 9 months, and 25 days.

The parishioners of St. Joseph Church in Terre Haute, whom Father Bede had served faithfully for years and who, together with almost everyone in Terre Haute, esteemed him highly, requested that his remains be interred in their cemetery.

Father Martin preached at the funeral of Father Bede. Father Bede's grave, underneath a large mound near the center of St. Joseph cemetery, is surmounted by a suitable monument.³⁶

Both Einsiedeln and St. Meinrad had their hope for the future of the mission house anchored in Father Martin. Besides being observant of community life, he also spent himself generously in every kind of monastic work at hand, manual, literary, and educational, often also helping in parishes, conducting mission or parish retreats—all this along with the ultimate responsibility for the whole institute. It was perhaps more than what one man should have ventured; but he was confident—perhaps too confident—of his hardy constitution.

For some months in the year 1864, Father Martin also took charge of Tell City and Troy. On Sunday, July 3, he had to attend to some sick people at Troy who were suffering from the same malady which Father Eugene had contracted on a sick call. He returned to St. Meinrad on the same Sunday. Though not feeling well, on Monday he played the organ at the High Mass. Even on Wednesday he did not think it necessary to have the physician called; but as his condition grew alarmingly worse, Father Isidor, on Thursday, called Doctor Kempf, at Ferdinand.

³⁶ Henry S. Cawthorn, *St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Vincennes, Indiana*, 1892; *Wahrheitsfr.*, Oct. 5, 1875, p. 76; *Einsiedler Kalender*, 1877, pp. 53-54.

However, the patient could not retain any of the various medicines prescribed. By Friday night, the doctor sent directions for a special treatment. The night was well advanced, and Father Isidor suggested that it might be a good thing to wait until morning since it was now too late; to which Father Martin replied: "Yes, alas, all is too late."

Several physicians were called in for consultation; one of them told Father Isidor that the patient was in a critical condition. It was then that the community promised to send an offering to Einsiedeln to have a Mass celebrated in the shrine of the Blessed Virgin for Father Martin's recovery.

On Sunday morning, July 10, during the absence of the other Fathers, who were on missions, Father Isidor at the patient's request heard his confession and administered Holy Viaticum to him. One devoted person from the town made a very beautiful wreath of flowers to be placed as a votive ornament about the replica of the statue of the Blessed Virgin of Einsiedeln in the church at St. Meinrad. At Ferdinand many votive candles were lighted at the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and, together with many people, the Sisters of Providence, who at that time taught school at Ferdinand, throughout the day sent many prayers to heaven. In the evening the church was filled with people who had come to attend a special devotion of intercession for the sick man. (In those days, as Father Isidor remarked, few people in country places would come to church for an evening devotion.) Even in the relatively distant Tell City, special devotions were well attended on that Sunday for Father Martin.

On the Wednesday following, Father Martin arose from bed; on Thursday he walked about the house; on Friday he ventured outside; on Saturday, July 16, the Feast of the Blessed Virgin of Einsiedeln, the titular feast of the church at St. Meinrad, Father Martin again said Mass. But it took him two months to regain his former strength.³⁷

Just before his illness Father Martin had repeatedly commented

³⁷ St. M. Ll. X, pp. 1176-1178 (Isidor to the Abbot, Aug. 8, 1864).

favorably upon the monastic spirit at St. Meinrad, especially on the edifying manner in which the senior Fathers, with the one regrettable exception of Father Ulrich, were co-operating with him.

In things spiritual we can only rejoice over the progress of the little mission house in St. Meinrad. The order in the monastery and in the school are as good as one can ever expect in this limited space. The spirit of the whole house is an excellent one, and if we do not precipitate things and, manfully resisting the many temptations in that regard, quietly proceed along our tranquil, modest way, the blessing of God will imperceptibly strengthen the much-endangered undertaking and will prosper it thoroughly in the midst of trials and privations. . . . Among us Fathers there prevails the best understanding.³⁸

A little later, at the time of his return from a prolonged stay at Terre Haute, he wrote to Father Gall, at Einsiedeln:

I very gladly returned again to St. Meinrad: the psalmody in the choir . . . the life in and with God's free world, the old monastic order from four o'clock in the morning till nine in the evening, the calm peace of God within the Union torn up by the gigantic civil war, these and many other pertinent benefits are heavenly blessings that I would not exchange for anything in the world.³⁹

In the same year, after his illness, he wrote to the same Father:

Much, very much still is wanting at St. Meinrad; yet it is a source of great encouragement to me when I compare its present state with that of four years ago. Exteriorly and interiorly the place can no longer be recognized, and now we can live in accordance with our vocation and are on the right way to becoming for ourselves and for others what we should be: religious—Benedictines at that—educators, and missionaries.

In September, 1864—the war was still in progress—there was some excitement in and around St. Meinrad when Father Isidor's name came up in the draft for military service; his name was the

³⁸ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 945 (Martin to the Abbot, Feb. 1, 1864); p. 948 (Martin to Gall, June 4, 1864).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 951 (Oct. 26, 1864).

twenty-first among the seventy-three from Harrison Township. Several men volunteered to substitute for him; however, always frail of health, when he presented himself for physical examination, he was not accepted.⁴⁰

Father Isidor was Domestic Superior and, from July, 1864, Superior of the missions as well. He also had charge of the congregation of St. Meinrad. Besides this, he carried on his duties of teaching, and he was the local postmaster. He now felt that all this could not be adequately attended to by one man.

Desirous of rising to the situation, Fathers Isidor, Chrysostom, Wolfgang, and Martin, after meeting in conference, came to the conclusion that the good of the community demanded that the Abbot appoint a Superior to represent himself, one who would be called, and actually be, the Superior of the whole mission house; under date of February 6, 1865, Father Isidor, as acting Superior, sent this request to the abbot.⁴¹

In his letter Father Isidor added that Father Chrysostom and he were of the opinion that Father Martin, who was still only the administrator, was the one best qualified for the office of Superior. Father Isidor pointed out that Father Martin had, when asked, indicated his willingness to accept the responsibility if the Abbot would release him to St. Meinrad. Father Isidor wanted to be relieved of his own position as soon as possible, he wrote; if, on a former occasion, he had volunteered to take over St. Meinrad, he had done that only on account of the existing emergency, to meet which he had nothing to offer but a good will. Finally, the affairs of St. Meinrad having now expanded so much, he felt still less competent to preside over them as Superior; however, he was ready with all his heart to work with the rest for the common good, but in a subordinate position.

By letter of May 2, 1865, the Abbot, acquiescing to Father Isidor's request, appointed Father Martin Superior, though with regrets

⁴⁰ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 949 (Isidor to the Abbot, Oct. 13, 1864); X, p. 1182 (the same, Dec. 31, 1864).

⁴¹ St. M. Ll. XI, pp. 1195-1196.

that his plans as to Father Martin's future in Einsiedeln had to be given up.⁴²

This appointment of Father Martin as Prior was merely a resumption of the Abbot's original plan of organization for the mission house as laid down in the *Statutes* years previously; it changed nothing in the dependent relationship of St. Meinrad to Einsiedeln; but it did mark a progress over the state of uncertainty implied in Father Martin's appointment merely as Administrator—a progress that soon proved its genuineness by putting forth vigorous buds of the ever new life inherent in monasticism. As early as July 18, 1866, Father Martin could assure the Abbot: "We at St. Meinrad live together in real happiness and only wish it always to remain so; the Juniors faithfully follow the good example of the Seniors, and everything gives promise of a delightful future."⁴³

On June 29 of that year the little community in a body joined the Apostleship of Prayer; further, on the Octave of the feast of St. Meinrad, 1867, Father Martin wrote that in imitation of Einsiedeln the Fathers at St. Meinrad had now resolved to offer the daily Conventual Mass for the Community.⁴⁴

At the Bishop's special request Fathers Martin and Bede accompanied him, as his theologians, to the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore. The council was solemnly opened on October 7, 1866, and it closed on October 21. The printed text of the agenda and of the proposed decrees was divided into fourteen titles. The "theologians" were constituted into seven congregations, each of which was presided over by a Bishop. Father Martin belonged to the first congregation, Father Bede to the second. Each congregation was assigned two titles to work on. Their revision of the titles was submitted to the College of the Bishops, which decided what was to be

⁴² St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*; cf. *Ibid.* (the Abbot to Bede, Apr. 18, 1865).

⁴³ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 966 (Martin to the Abbot).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* (Martin to the Dean, Oct., St. Meinradi, 1867). St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Letter of Martin to "Mitbruder"—evidently Ildephons, Feb. 7, 1867).

corrected and what was to stand. The over-all purpose of the council was to supplement the previously fragmentary legislation of the Church in the United States of North America and to organize it into a *Corpus Iuris*.

During his stay at Baltimore Father Martin was offered "a splendid country seat and three adjacent parishes in Charles County, Maryland, for a foundation. "It is a pity," he wrote, "that I could not accept the offer." A similar offer was made in behalf of Iowa.⁴⁵

Father Bede gave his own account of the proceedings at the council. From among about a hundred theologians, belonging to different congregations, Fathers Martin and Bede were singled out to address the Fathers of the council assembled in the first public session on matters theological. Father Martin was the first to be called upon; next, Father Bede. The latter wrote, in his characteristic fashion: "No fun to face seven Archbishops, thirty-eight Bishops, and I do not know how many Doctors of Theology and say something—and that extemporaneously—for the edification and enlightenment, use and benefit of the 'dearly beloved in Christ'; yet that earned for us two the congratulations of our Bishop, who as a rule seldom pays a personal compliment but who this time seemed to be proud of his theologians." Father Bede described also the throng, estimated at 50,000, that crowded the sides of the streets near the Cathedral, along which the procession moved. Besides these, "the windows of all the houses were filled with heads, and the housetops were crowded with spectators; some of the recently freed colored men were majestically perched even on the chimney tops, surveying the colorful scene and with gentle, timely thrust of the foot calling the attention of wife or sweetheart or some other representative of black womanly dignity to this or that aesthetic scene in the nether world."⁴⁶

In things material Father Martin continued the saving economy upon which he had insisted from the beginning. At the end of the year 1867 the debt had been reduced to \$19,265.24. The total expense for the school, including even medical care and stationery for

⁴⁵ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 967-968 (Martin to the Abbot, Oct. 17, 1866).

⁴⁶ St. M. Ll. V, pp. 705-706 (Bede to the Abbot, Jan. 29, 1867).

the students, was \$5,346.19, whereas the gross income from the school was \$5,611.64. Not counting on any returns on the investment, that left \$265.45 for improvements. The professor-monks of course received no salary. The farm showed a better gain. Its total expense amounted to \$2,385.37; its income to \$3,491.30. This was a gain of



BROTHER BERNARDIN OLINGER, O.S.B.

\$1,105.93. The income from the farm varied of course from year to year; yet the farm, together with the work on the parishes and the monks' faithful observance of their vows of poverty, helped to support the school. Father Wolfgang, who as Procurator was the manager of the farm, regretted that in the absence of a greater number of industrious Brothers a very large part of the income from the farm was consumed by hired labor.

At that time a new start was made to build up a community of Lay Brothers fervently animated by the Benedictine rule of life—"pray and work." On the feast of St. Maur, January 15, 1867, Bernard Olinger, of Ferdinand, Indiana, and Edward Hobi, a brother of Father Isidor, were clothed with the habit of St. Benedict. Bernard Olinger had come to St. Meinrad earlier, but the Civil War had interfered with his reception. The two made their profession as Brother Bernardin and as Brother Fridolin, on January 20, 1868. These two were later joined by a number of others, mostly from Baden, of good disposition; some were expert craftsmen who contributed much to the development of St. Meinrad.

Brother Bernardin, a man of great energy and endurance, was refectorian for some time and also had charge of the farm, under the authority of the Procurator, Father Wolfgang. To the farm hands he got to be known familiarly as "the boss" or, more reverentially, "Brother Boss." The hired hands tried his patience here and there. To their secret delight he once exclaimed in righteous indignation, shaking his shaggy beard: "Wherever I am, there's nothing doing; and I just can't be everywhere." Even in the infirmities of his old age—he went to his reward on May 24, 1927, in his eighty-ninth year—he persisted in doing something around the farm. The same could be said of Brother Fridolin and of many another of that hard-working generation.

In the year 1867 St. Meinrad bought a small printing press together with the type; it cost \$450. Father Martin wrote the Abbot: "With time, it will be of good service to us and can eventually also be a source of income."⁴⁷ This printing press was installed in a small room of the old monastery, in 1869. Since then, St. Meinrad has always had its printing press, which from this simple beginning has gradually been developed into the present elaborate Abbey Press.

The presence of a printing press did not mean that in those days St. Meinrad went into the publishing business; it may, however, be considered to have been a spontaneous manifestation of the scriptorium idea inherent to ancient monasticism. Besides a number of small

⁴⁷ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 975-977 (Martin to the Abbot, Jan. 15, 1868).

jobs for local use, such as *Benedictiner-Handbüchlein, Rosenkranz-Andachten für verschiedene Zeiten des Jahres*, Druck von der St. Meinrad's Abtei, 1874, this press produced *The Rule of Our Holy Father St. Benedict, Translated by a Priest of Mount Melleray, St. Meinrad's Benedictine Abbey, Indiana*, 1879.

With regard to literary activity, the Fathers occasionally had sent literary contributions to the *Annals* of various mission societies since the founding of St. Meinrad; Fathers Bede and Chrysostom possessed special ability in the composition of such articles. The uncertain state of affairs and the manifold tasks incumbent upon the few Fathers during the first nine years were not favorable to literary activity; but when St. Meinrad had been placed upon a securer footing and there were at hand several clerical Novices and students, Father Martin, as early as 1862, planned a rather bold literary project.⁴⁸

Personally convinced that the Catholic Church in the United States of North America was neither sufficiently understood nor appreciated in German-speaking Europe and that as a result there were few vocations and a lack of enthusiasm for the missions in America, Father Martin, or, as he usually wrote, the Benedictines at St. Meinrad, planned to translate into German a number of works by American authors treating of the history of the Church in the United States; only works that could serve as sources were to be selected. These translations were to be gathered into four volumes. In case there would be a demand for more, the series was to be continued, to present a history of the seven ecclesiastical provinces.

The first volume, *Die Katholische Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika, dargestellt von einheimischen Schriftstellern, Deutsch von den Benediktinern zu St. Meinrad im Indiana-Staat* (Regensburg: G. I. Manz, 1864), contains a concise factual foreword, which really introduces into the purpose and the contents of the whole series as planned. There followed: 1. *The Catholic Literature in the United States*, by John Gilmary Shea—an article

⁴⁸ St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1460-1465 (Martin to Mueller, Dec. 2 [or Dec. 1], 1862; Martin to the Abbot, and other pertinent correspondence).

previously published in the *Metropolitan*, Baltimore, but revised and enlarged by its author for the present work; 2. *The Catholic History of North America*, by Thomas d'Arcy McGee; 3. *American Martyrology or Biographies of Catholic Missionaries . . .* by John Gilmary Shea. An *Appendix* to the volume contains: *The Last Will of Christopher Columbus*; *The Letter and the Bull of Alexander VI Regarding the Discovery of America*; *Brief of Pope Paul III, A.D. 1537*, declaring and ordering that the American Indians be regarded as human beings and that their dignity as such be respected; *The Spanish Form of Taking Possession*; *The Jesuits in Canada* (a number of testimonies favorable to them); *The Address of the Roman Catholics of America to George Washington, and His Reply*.

The first volume (*Die Katholische Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika*) was dedicated to King Louis I, of Bavaria. The King had not personally been a benefactor of St. Meinrad, but several pecuniary contributions had come to St. Meinrad through the *Ludwig-Missionsverein*. On January 8, 1865, the King graciously accepted the dedication.⁴⁹ *Literarischer Handweiser*,⁵⁰ a literary review of eminence, commented very favorably upon the book. And Peter Guilday, of the history department of the Catholic University, Washington, wrote at a more recent date. "It has often occurred to me that the idea involved is about the best thing that has been done in its line."⁵¹

Though the manuscripts for the next two volumes were almost finished in 1864, no further volume of the series was published.⁵² Abbot Henry feared that St. Meinrad was tying up too much money in the publications.

The Second Plenary Council of Baltimore had decreed: "We

⁴⁹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot

⁵⁰ Number 36, pp. 256-257.

to Martin, Feb. 4, 1865. The Abbot included a copy of the King's letter). Cf. the same to the same, Nov. 30, 1865.

⁵¹ Peter Guilday to Abbot Athanasius Schmitt, Aug. 3, 1925. An excerpt of this letter is to be found in copy of this work preserved in St. Meinrad Archabbey archives.

⁵² St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 947 (Martin to the Abbot, Apr. 22, 1864).

deem it very desirable that the rudiments of the Gregorian chant be explained and practiced in the parochial schools, thereby gradually to increase the number of those who can sing the psalms well, until, in the course of time, the greater portion of the people learn to sing Vespers and other portions of the service with the ministers and the choir. . . ."⁵³

Father Martin had been a member of the congregation that had dealt with this decree. Upon his return home he at once set about to have St. Meinrad make a major contribution toward putting this decree into execution. Using the Einsiedeln traditional version of the Gregorian chant for the Ordinary of the Mass, he composed two volumes entitled *Cantarium Romanum, Pars Prima: Ordinarium Missae*. Besides an instructive bilingual (English and German) introduction, each volume contains ten Masses, together with the *Asperges, Vidi Aquam*, and the *Benedictio Pontificalis*. The first volume, a smaller book, was for the singers; the second, a larger book, was for the organist. In this second book Father Martin harmonized the Gregorian melodies; the harmonization was to serve not only for organ accompaniment, but, strangely enough, also for a vocal quartet. The harmonization is open to criticism inasmuch as it frequently employs parallel fifths and octaves and a faulty relationship of chords. The arrangement is also without rhythmic structure; besides, nearly every note receives separate harmonization, and so the rendition of the melodies sounds very clumsy.⁵⁴

In 1870, Father Martin gave to the press (Benziger Brothers) *Die neuesten Beschluesse der Vatikanischen Kirchenversammlung, lateinisch und deutsch*, translated by himself. This was a smaller work, 48 pages in large octavo size. Four years later there appeared *Der heilige Benedict und seine Orden, Von einem Benediktiner in*

⁵³ *Conc. Plen. Balt. II*, n. 380.

⁵⁴ St. M. Ll. V. p. 711 (Bede to the Abbot, March 6, 1869); VIII, p. 992 (Martin to the Abbot, Dec. 23, 1869). These two books were published "*Studio & Sumptibus Monachorum Ord. S. Benedicti Conv. St. Meinradi, Ind. 1869*," and the printing was done from plates stereotyped at the Franklin type foundry, Cincinnati; but there is no indication as to where they were printed.

St. Meinrad, Ind., 1874. And still later, in 1886, appeared *The Glories of Divine Grace*. This English version of Joseph Scheeben's renowned work, *Die Herrlichkeiten der göttlichen Gnade*, was made by Father Boniface Luebbermann, O.S.B., St. Meinrad.

The educational result of the scholastic year of 1862 was satisfactory both in the commercial and in the classical course.⁵⁵

Father Fintan's "vacation" at Terre Haute, in the summer of 1862, was prolonged to February, 1865, and so Father Martin in the meantime acted as Rector; but he intended to entrust that work to one of "the Frater Novices" as soon as conditions would permit.⁵⁶ It seems he first selected Meinrad McCarthy, who took Simple Vows on December 8, 1862, and who was ordained a priest on January 26, 1863, in accordance with the arrangement previously mentioned. The choice was not a happy one, if one may judge from the entry that the considerate Florentin Sondermann made in his diary under date of April 5, 1863: "Today, Father Martin was not at home, and Father Meinrad, as always on such occasions, was in a terribly bad mood." During the next scholastic year the gentler Father Benedict Brunet was "Prefect" of the students.⁵⁷

At the opening of the following scholastic year, September 14, 1863, the capacity of the one-story frame building was taxed to the limit by thirty students—several others had to be refused admission—and yet the size of the debt on hand did not permit the mission house to undertake any building project. When, in January, 1863, the Bishop had come to St. Meinrad for ordinations, plans were talked over for the Bishop to build at St. Meinrad a seminary for the students and the faculty, even as he was building an orphanage at Vincennes. The Bishop had even designated the place where the building ought to be erected. But he had made no definite promise, and

⁵⁵ St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1467-1468 (*Remarks on Examinations and Year's Work*, July 4, 1863).

⁵⁶ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 938 (Martin to the Abbot, Oct. 24, 1862).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 942 (Martin to the Abbot, Sept. 17, 1863); p. 946 (the same, Apr. 22, 1864).

his favorable comment upon the project seems to have been a manifestation of good will rather than a resolution.⁵⁸

Upon his return from Terre Haute on February 19, 1865, Father Fintan resumed his office as Rector of the school; he retained that office until the end of April, 1869, when he was appointed Instructor



THE COLLEGE

Since September, 1866, with second story. Scholasticate, 1882-1893

of the Fraters and Master of the Frater Novices. Father Placidus Zarn succeeded him as Rector.⁵⁹

In the summer of 1866, the Bishop resolved again to send all his theologians to St. Meinrad, in addition to his other clerical students. To accommodate the increase in the enrollment, which was

⁵⁸ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 941-942 (Martin to the Abbot, June 12, 1863); p. 942 (the same, Sept. 11, 1863).

⁵⁹ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 960 (Martin to the Abbot, Jan. 15, 1866); p. 988 (the same, May 6, 1869).

forty-four (including four Fraters), St. Meinrad built a second story over the frame college building.⁶⁰ This addition was blessed on October 5, 1866. Since in the spring of that year a special house had been built for the hired hands, much was gained for monastic quiet in the community building and for discipline in general.

For the beginning of that scholastic year, Sondermann has an entry in his *Tage-Buch* the echoes of which, increased to a twelve-fold intensity, have stayed alive to the present day:

During vacation I had tried to get together some band instruments, to organize a brass band; and I was successful. At Jasper they had had a music band, which had broken up. I succeeded in purchasing the old instruments cheap. I brought them with me to St. Meinrad and in a short time all was in order. Alerding blew the E-flat cornet; Bedel, the B-flat cornet; Heck, the E-flat tenor; I [Sondermann], the II E-flat tenor; Kessing, the B-flat baritone; and Schnell, the tuba. At first, people stopped their ears and kept their distance; but we did not let that worry us and kept on blowing lustily, and now, after two months, we are presentable. Hurrah for the St. Meinrad brass band!

On June 21, 1867, Bishop Maurice de St. Palais ordained at St. Meinrad four theologians to the priesthood: Meinrad Fleishmann, Louis Brassart, Bernard H. Kintrup, and Denis J. McMullen. Of these four, Kintrup and McMullen came to St. Meinrad merely to be prepared for ordination. That was the first ordination of secular priests at St. Meinrad. Florentin Sondermann, who, together with his class, was ordained deacon on that same day, carefully recorded all the ordinations of this and of the next year in his *Tage-Buch*.

Toward the end of the scholastic year of 1867-1868, Father Martin requested the Bishop to pay \$75 a semester for board and tuition of his seminarians and to pay in advance for each semester, for the cost of living had doubled during the preceding eight years; he informed the Bishop that other seminaries had to raise their charge for board and tuition and were receiving payment in advance;

⁶⁰ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, (Martin to Ildephons, July 16, 1866; J. Fl. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch*, Sept. 24, 1866).

if St. Meinrad would not receive advance payment, it would be compelled to borrow money at high interest to meet the expenses of conducting the seminary.⁶¹

The Bishop answered that if higher board and tuition would be demanded, he would send some of his seminarians elsewhere, and, if he were required to pay in advance for each semester, he would take all his seminarians away from St. Meinrad.⁶²

To this ultimatum Father Martin replied that under the existing circumstances it would be quite agreeable to St. Meinrad if the Bishop would carry out his resolve; he actually asked him to do that. Writing to his Abbot, Father Martin said that such an action on the part of the Bishop would set the Fathers free to conduct a purely monastic school, in which they could bring a more effective pedagogical influence to bear upon the students; of these students, some had shown a tendency to arrogate to themselves, as the Bishop's students, special prerogatives and to consider their professors as the hired hands of the Bishop rather than their spiritual Fathers.

After making inquiry at other seminaries, the Bishop found that the seminary at Montreal, Canada, would accept his students for \$70 a semester, but only in gold; moreover, the journey to and from Montreal would be very expensive. St. Thomas Seminary, Kentucky, would take them for \$140 a year, payable after Easter; but the additional expense of going to and from St. Thomas twice a year, in summer and at Christmas, would bring the total to about the same amount as St. Meinrad asked.

Since the total amount involved was about the same, the Bishop determined to let his students choose to which seminary they wanted to go. "The Germans"—he meant the German-speaking seminarians—"would probably go to your school, and the others, elsewhere." But he hoped his Deacons could return to St. Meinrad and remain until their ordination to the priesthood. "But if that disturbs your plans for a college for next year, they can finish their course at Vin-

⁶¹ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 979 (Martin to the Abbot, June 5, 1868).

⁶² St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Bishop de St. Palais to Father Martin, May 14, 1868).

cennes.”⁶³ The letter was conciliatory, even cordial. Those who spoke German and some others chose to return to St. Meinrad, where the hurriedly constructed second story over the college building accommodated them.⁶⁴

What decided several students—among them the future Bishop Denis O'Donaghue, as he himself narrated—not to return to St. Meinrad, was that Father Martin announced that smoking would no longer be tolerated. Preferring to smoke, they finished their philosophy at Bardstown, Kentucky, and for theology went to the Sulpician Seminary in Montreal, Canada. To their dismay they found that in Montreal smoking was strictly forbidden. This situation became for them the occasion for developing a peculiar devotion to Our Lady, whose shrine on the grounds they would visit frequently and, while one would remain in the grotto as a lookout, the others would go behind it to steal a smoke. They gave that shrine a new title—“Our Lady of Smokes.”

After the months of unpleasant business correspondence since spring 1868, September 28 was a glorious day both for the Diocese and for St. Meinrad, for on that day the Bishop ordained at St. Meinrad a class of eight to the priesthood: John Florentin Sondermann, Victor Schnell, Bernard Herman Alerding, Michael Heck, Herman Henry Kessing, Peter Siebmann, Placidus Zarn, O.S.B., and Benno Gerber, O.S.B.⁶⁵

Toward the end of April, 1869, Father Isidor, the Master of the Novices and the Instructor of the Fraters, was sent to Covington, Kentucky, to substitute for a pastor. And so Father Fintan, the Rector of the school, took over Father Isidor's duties, and Father Placidus was appointed Rector.⁶⁶

⁶³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Bishop de St. Palais to Father Martin, July 19, 1868).

⁶⁴ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 979 (Martin to the Abbot, June 5, 1868); p. 981 (the same, Aug. 25, 1868).

⁶⁵ *Liber Ordinationis Dioceseos Vincennopolitanae*. Quoted from J. Fl. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch*.

⁶⁶ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 988 (Martin to the Abbot, May 6, 1869).

In the autumn of 1868, an attempt was made to open a so-called college at St. Peter's mission, near Rome, Perry County. Father Fintan had started the mission at Rome. From 1818 to 1859, Rome had been the county seat. But, even though it still seemed to be a promising town in 1868, and even though both Catholics and non-Catholics offered a building for a "college," the prospects were not such as to justify the venture.

The understanding of the American Benedictine missionaries for education on an even wider range appears from the hope that Father Bede expressed as early as October 31, 1853, that the Benedictine Order would establish in Rome, Italy, a central House of Studies, to be called "Benedictineum." The Anselmianum of more recent years is the realization of that hope.⁶⁷

The strictly missionary work that the Fathers continued to do in the Diocese was both extensively and intensively remarkable, especially in consideration of the fewness of their numbers and of the primitive living conditions and means of transportation. Besides taking over the ordinary pastoral care of several stations, Father Martin himself preached many missions and parish retreats, especially during the Jubilee Year of 1865.

During that same year Father Bede preached, from the beginning of August until the end of December, eighteen missions, usually five sermons daily, excepting only the days he needed to travel from one place to another. He was edified by the zeal with which the local clergy and even the Bishops of three dioceses heard confessions during the missions.⁶⁸ Father Chrysostom, too, worked untiringly in this field. The archives of St. Meinrad contain many manuscript sermons of these two eloquent speakers. For the purpose of regular pastoral work the Bishop of Vincennes gradually turned over to the Benedictines more than he had originally assigned to them, even though at times it was difficult for the superior to co-ordinate the work with monastic community life.

This mission work is of special interest by reason of the reports

⁶⁷ St. M. Ll. VI, p. 611 (Bede to Gall Morel).

⁶⁸ St. M. Ll. V, p. 705 (Bede to the Abbot, Jan. 29, 1867).

that some of the Fathers occasionally sent to Einsiedeln. Even though touched upon in previous chapters, the mission labors of the Fathers of this period and of the following years deserve more extended treatment than can be given here.

The mission field in Indiana was vast and impoverished, and there was a scarcity of missionaries. Father Ulrich wrote to the Dean of Einsiedeln, on March 15, 1853, that in the whole State of Indiana there were only forty-three priests.

Of the priests coming from foreign lands the more desirable ones usually found a welcome in the eastern Dioceses; hence, when Bishop de St. Palais heard that the two Benedictines, Fathers Ulrich and Bede, were headed for his Diocese, he requested the Archbishop of New York to use his influence that they be not won for some eastern Diocese. As a result of that geographical advantage of the east, a number of the priests who did come west were a liability rather than a help to the Bishops. At that very time Bishop de St. Palais was contemplating taking action against some of them.

Yet Father Ulrich was glad to report that he had also found some exemplary priests in Indiana. Shortly after his arrival, he himself had had to go with one of these, Father Brandt, on unfamiliar paths and partly at night to a place where they were to conduct a mission. As they crossed a creek, their Mass vestments were soaked and even the altar breads were spoiled. They had to abandon their broken-down open carriage and each of them mounted one of the saddleless and unbridled horses. When they arrived at their destination, they procured wheat flour and in a primitive manner prepared new altar breads. They found people who for eighteen years had not been able to receive the sacraments, infants a half year old and not yet baptized, children of fifteen and sixteen years of age who did not know how to make the Sign of the Cross, say the Our Father, or repeat the Ten Commandments.

There was a scarcity of priestly volunteers for the Diocese of Vincennes. The reason, the Bishop thought, lay in the low salary given his priests, for he had learned that the salary in other Dioceses was higher. He therefore had the salary raised from \$300 to \$400,

with the intention of sending pastors from then on only to such congregations as would comply with that ruling.⁶⁹ It was a necessary regulation in behalf of the clergy; yet some eight years later, after the cost of living had meanwhile doubled, the Bishop was reluctant to grant the increase of \$10 a year for the board and tuition of his clerical students.

In his reports and letters Father Bede fortunately committed to writing many of his missionary experiences and observations. For example, in a report dated September, 1853, he wrote:

The evening of Holy Saturday I set out from Vincennes, for I had to administer the sacraments to a sick Irishman who lived in the midst of the woods fourteen miles distant from Vincennes. With another young Irishman as my guide I started on my way through water and prairies; one stream we had to cross on a ferry. The sick man to whom I was hurrying had worked on the railroad. The Irish railroad workers lead a really wandering life in America. They put up their huts in the midst of the bush, as the woods are here called; four poles rammed into the ground, with thin boards as walls, are the whole luxurious residence. They do not even take the trouble to stop up the cracks between the boards, and how a roof is to be constructed is of no concern to these Irish-American architects; if only the rain does not come into the hut in streams, they consider their work to be a little masterpiece. A hole through which one enters and leaves serves as a door; naturally, wind and weather as well as men and animals have free passage through it; and yet, after he has erected such a stable for himself in the midst of the woods, the poor Irishman feels as happy and glad as a king in his palace. When I entered the hut, I found the condition of the sick man so serious that I at once administered to him the Holy Sacraments of the Dying. Several friends and relatives of the sick man, who live in similar huts scattered throughout the forest, were assembled here, and I made use of the occasion to address them in their own tongue with a few edifying words.

⁶⁹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Bishop's letter, Jan. 16, 1861, to Father Isidor, pastor at Ferdinand).

Tears of emotion and thanks were the reward for my words: the good people felt happy that a priest, who had in good time brought the last consolations of holy religion to their dying companion in the solitude of the woods, now also spoke to them, in their own tongue, words of life; and I was deeply touched and felt abundantly rewarded for the hardships of the road. . . .

Night had come, and I had to remain in the hut till day-break. At the wall opposite the hole that served as a door a pallet was prepared for me; to it the wind, blowing through the cracks in the board-wall, had free access. Besides the sick man, several others, some of whom belonged to the hut and some who had come to visit the sick man, stayed overnight in the same room. It took a while until I could get to sleep, because the wind blew violently. I pulled my fur cap over my ears and wanted to stick my head under the blanket; but that did not work because the bed had a smell just the opposite of a good smell. I do not know how I finally managed to fall asleep. Then I took a breath that quite refreshed me. The first rays of the Easter-morning sun greeted me in a forest primeval of the land that now was to become my home. On the holy day of Easter, I would gladly have celebrated the holy mysteries, surrounded as I was by these good Irishmen; but, the pity of it, I did not have the altar requirements with me. And so, after a few comforting and encouraging words, I had to take the road back to the Seminary near Vincennes where I could celebrate holy Mass.⁷⁰

While Father Ulrich, together with Father Brandt, was conducting missions at Terre Haute and Lafayette, Father Bede was kept busy preaching at Vincennes a series of Lenten sermons on the marks of the true Church. At the Bishop's request, Father Bede also accompanied him on his Confirmation tour to the Evansville district; everywhere he had to preach in both German and English. On April 29 he took over at Madison until the Bishop would be able to send one of the secular clergy.⁷¹

⁷⁰ St. M. Ll. XII, pp. 1312-1319 (Bede to the Abbot).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1314-1316.

He described Madison as a trouble spot. It was the second biggest city in Indiana, with a population of 16,000, of whom 8,000 were Catholics (5000 Irish and 3000 Germans); the rest of the citizenry was split up into various Protestant sects.

Many of the Catholics wished that the Benedictines would settle on a hill overlooking Madison and the majestic Ohio River, which "fully deserves the name *Belle-rivière* that the French, the first settlers of the Mississippi, gave it." About the inhabitants of Madison Father Bede had this to say:

In origin, the inhabitants of Madison are quite a mixture consisting, in general, of Americans, Irish, and Germans. The Germans are mostly tradesmen, storekeepers, and saloon-keepers, assembled here from all the regions of Germany. . . . One regrets to have to record of them that they consider the complying with their religious obligations not exactly paramount, and that national frictions, especially between the North- and the South-Germans, are a powerful impediment not only to a genuine religious amalgamation but also to a simple civic union. Of a very specially harmful influence on religious life in general are the secret societies, which, however, are quite public societies here in America; man is just so constituted that he feels an urge to be in spiritual contact with his fellow man, and because on account of the fewness in numbers the church associations are not sufficiently prominent and the shepherd can not adequately seek the straying sheep, the poor people fall into the hands of the Freemasons, Odd Fellows, Turners, and of other associations detrimental spiritually and morally. With touching simplicity and folly such and such a poor fellow gives his hard-earned good money to buy himself into a club of that sort in order to parade as a club member. But the worst for the poor fellow at this nefarious game is not the loss of his dollars; it is as though with the entrance into such an association a devil of pride had taken formal possession of such people; in the most pitiful spiritual need and ridiculous ignorance they believe themselves alone wise and act as though they had eaten wisdom with spoons. It is hard to help such people because their folly causes them to shut themselves up against all instruction.—

Further, a real pest of the country are the bad newspapers. Nearly everybody here must take newspapers on account of public advertisements; and because the number of Catholics is still too small, they are partly not able and partly too indifferent to publish good newspapers, and so the newspaper concern is mostly in the hands of infidels or of heretics, causing great harm to souls. The German papers of that sort are specially insolent and shameless and in contents and form like nasty offscouring written in part by outcasts of European society. This daily press creates an immeasurable amount of harm among the population; after even a short experience I could give many examples of this. More painfully than in Europe I have here come to feel that kindly correction and instruction bear but little fruit in one who has been spoiled by daily reading of bad newspapers.—But apart from those who perish in this way, there is a splendid core among the Germans, which, when properly cared for, will grow and, like the American soil, will produce a hundredfold. This portion of the Germans is glad at the arrival of the shepherd of souls; he often receives from it touching proofs of this joy and of a truly Christian sentiment.

The second class of inhabitants [of Madison], the Irish, are good, easily and heartily sociable people, with whom the priest, *soggarth*, always stands in high esteem. Their main, native weakness is their tendency to whisky, which they overcome with difficulty; yet they think highly of their apostle of temperance, Father Mathew. The highly regarded influence of the priest, if it is brought to bear upon them earnestly and mildly, also helps the weak will very much interiorly, and so the victory over this bad vice is often won. The Irish are industrious workers on the big construction projects in this country; the railroads are indebted to their diligent hands.

The third class are the Americans. They make the impression of being less responsive than others to the deeper, religious life; for them, gain counts as the highest in life; for some it is the only objective. But this indifference toward things religious is at bottom the product of ignorance. With a greater number of capable Catholic priests to cultivate this field systematically by instruction, one may also

expect from it an abundant harvest for the Kingdom of God, for the character of the American is basically noble; once he learns through thorough and persistent instruction to put away, on the one hand, his mistrust and, on the other hand, his credulity, he is capable of effecting great things; but certainly only when he, who now seems to live and love only the multiplication table, in addition to it also learns to live and love the Catholic catechism—the full Christian truth—only then can the greatness and the beauty of his character reveal itself.

Ordinarily the Fathers did not have the leisure to write pastoral armchair philosophy; if they were not putting up a church or some other building—for which work the Yankee multiplication table, though irksome, was very necessary—the long trips over rough roads and trails and in all sorts of weather was a great hardship, at times even a danger.

One day, Father Bede, at that time residing at Cannelton, was returning from Jasper, a distance of about forty miles. As their Extraordinary Confessor, he had heard the confessions of the Sisters of Providence, whom he designated as

my very dear Sisters, because my first trip to them cost me my beautiful horse, a horse I would not have given up for \$100. It was not funny to be carried away in a full gallop on the back of a recently purchased three-and-a-half-year-old wild pony that, when the bridle was broken, could no longer be guided and controlled as it dashed through the dense forest, the rider's head at the level of the limbs of the trees, his feet lashed by the young undergrowth. I was dazed, until all at once I found myself standing on my feet in the bushes and [turning my head] saw the horse galloping away behind my back. But I did not remain standing for long; I fell on my knees to say a prayer of thanks to Mary, to whom I had very confidently recommended myself when I recognized the danger.

Probably some resilient limbs of a tree had swept him backwards out of the saddle and set him down, unscathed, at a safe distance from the horse galloping off in the opposite direction.⁷²

⁷² St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1352 (Bede to the Dean, Feb. 7, 1854).

Father Ulrich did not fare so well as that when on one occasion he was thrown out of the buggy and painfully bruised and wounded.

During the night of March 13, 1854, Father Bede, at that time at Cannelton, had the sad experience of having to administer to the victims of a frightful tragedy; the steamer *Reindeer* had exploded, and of more than fifty people on it only three escaped death.

At the sound of the explosion, Father Bede seized the Holy Oils and hurried down to the river, a few blocks from where he was staying. Someone with a small boat took him out to the wreck, which he boarded. A friend of his, who had preceded him and who together with a few others had put the victims on mattresses hurriedly assembled on the floor of a large salon, tried to persuade him not to enter the room; he said the sight was too gruesome and that he himself could not endure it. Father Bede replied, "A Catholic priest does not visit such scenes out of curiosity but out of love of God and of man."

Moaning and weeping and screaming of men and women and children filled the room. The limbs and bodies of most of them were horribly scorched, scalded, and mangled. The blood had congealed in the wounds of some; from others the skin hung in shreds; from two boys it had somehow been torn from the wrists on forward so that it hung over the finger tips, and was held to the hands only at the fingernails. Passing from victim to victim, Father Bede was wholly intent upon finding out who were Catholics and upon giving them sacramental Absolution, the sacrament of Extreme Unction, and a few words of Christian consolation, and of giving whatever spiritual and bodily comfort he might also to the non-Catholics.⁷³

He first bent down to an Irish girl of about eighteen or nineteen years, whose whole body was badly burned and who was constantly screaming frantically.

"You are suffering great pain?" She did not even answer or look at me, for her eyelids were swollen shut from burns.

⁷³ St. M. Ll. V, pp. 714-718 (Cannelton, *Sol. Commemoratio Ss. Patris N. Benedicti*, 1854).

"I am a Catholic priest." "You are?" And with superhuman effort she opened her eyes, and for joy began to sob and weep and sing; stretching forth her bloated hand, she said: "O Father, give me your hand." "It would hurt you if I were to press your hand; it is burned." "O God, O God!"—she continued—"How shall I thank Thee! O Father, dear Father, now that God has sent you to me, I shall gladly die."

After receiving the sacraments and hearing the priest's consoling words, the girl became and remained quite calm.—From her Father Bede went to an athletically built Irish lad who was also dying. The young man was filling the room with a continued, loud, penitential cry: "'O my poor naked soul!' To him, also, my visit was as the appearance of an angel from heaven, and it is impossible for me to come any way near to describing the visible joy that pervaded his whole body at hearing the words: 'I am a Catholic priest.'"

Father Bede was especially touched by an Italian who, when addressed in English, answered mournfully: "*Io non capisco*" ("I don't understand"). And Father Bede: "*Io sono sacerdote cattolico*" ("I am a Catholic priest"). At that the Italian extended his quivering, bandaged hand toward Father Bede and looked at him with tender affection as though he wanted to embrace him. He, too, received the sacraments.

Father Bede's narrative continues:

One boy, about six years of age, felt death coming closer and closer to him. He knew that his parents and his two brothers and a sister—all three little ones—were among the wounded. As I gave the little fellow a drink of water, he said: "Good man, take me to mamma and papa—I'd like to say good-by to them; and I want to kiss my two little brothers and Nannette, and I want to die at their side. You know mamma; I must see her once more and—oh, I'm dying—take me." These words, spoken in a tone of pain, touched us. We took the boy and placed his mattress alongside that of his mother, and despite his pains the little one felt so well at being again with his mother and being able in his childlike manner to encourage her and to assure her

that with Papa and Billy and Johnny and Nanny they would all soon be in heaven. And, oh, the mother! She suffered in body all that is possible for a human being to suffer, and yet it was apparent that her heart was broken even more than her body, which lay there mangled and motionless in its death throes. She suffered quietly—one could see she did not want to frighten her children—but in her eyes one could plainly see the mother's love in conflict with the unspeakable pains of her body. She let the little one talk himself out and could answer him nothing but, "My child! My dearest child! My dear Josie!" She wanted to raise herself to kiss him, but her faintness held her fast and motionless on the mattress. Meanwhile the father came to, as from a deep sleep, and, despite the half-slumber preceding death, in his own fashion he also gave himself over to expressions of love of wife and children. . . . The whole family died that night.

Meanwhile some sight-seers had come on board. The rest, too is best told in Father Bede's words as found in a supplement to his report of that tragic event.

. . . The plan that was concocted against me the night of the explosion was directed against nothing less than my poor life. Some bigoted Methodists, to whom a Catholic priest is a thorn in the side, waylaid me on the boat in order to throw me overboard during the prevailing general confusion. They could not forgive "the damned priest" for having boarded the ship in order to bring his aid to the Catholics. As I was occupied in the performance of my professional duties, an Irishman came to me and whispered into my ear: "Father, be on your guard, out there they are saying suspicious things about you!" "What is it?" I asked. And he answered that he had not been able to hear everything, but that some out there were banding together, that he heard the word "the damned priest," that he had wanted to get closer to them but that they moved to another corner. I thought: "Bah, it is nothing!" Nor did I make anything of it. Shortly thereafter one was running after me, and, as I asked one of the injured whether he was a Catholic, this intruder said: "That's none of your business." I did not even look around, and continued my ministration. Next day

the talk was all over the town that I had been insulted on the boat and the whole plot became known that some had followed me in order, as they had said, to throw "the damned priest" overboard.⁷⁴

In the summer of 1854, the Fathers were kept busy by the "cholera," which had also invaded their district. Father Bede, at Cannelton, suffered a mild attack of it. This forced him to return to St. Meinrad for a while to be nursed back to health. From here he wrote to Einsiedeln:

Poor me is under house arrest at St. Meinrad. Father Prior is detaining me here for having been so simple as to become ill. For about eight weeks I was chased about so much by the cholera, day and night, from Cannelton to Rockport and very nearly to Fulda, that the heat penetrated almost into my very bone and marrow and so emaciated me that I hardly recognize myself when I look into the mirror. Not only the riding on horseback in a tropical heat has contributed to this, but also the irregular life as to eating and drinking, or rather the long fasts and the non-nourishing food that I received from the poor people. In addition to all that, the worst happened about three weeks ago. Early one Sunday I was suffering from the beginning of the attack of cholera. On account of the terrific pains in my abdomen and the utter weakness of my body—never very strong—I could scarcely finish my two Masses that day. A sermon was out of question. During the afternoon, I went to bed and, in the evening, took something to induce sweating. But, thanks be to God, I could not sweat. I say thanks be to God, because at midnight I was awakened to answer a call to a woman ill of the cholera. Had I been in a sweat, I should now probably be lying in the grave alongside Father Eugene. But as things were, the sick call did not cause me much harm beyond weakening me greatly; in return it afforded me the sweet consolation of having been able fully

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 639 (Bede O'Connor, O.S.B., to the Dean, monastery of Einsiedeln, September 14, 1854). As a rule, Father Bede's relations with non-Catholics were friendly; there existed an even cordial relation between him and Frederick Connor, a Methodist, of Troy. Such people, of course, would have indignantly condemned the plot alleged in this letter.

to attend to the person in time, for immediately after the reception of the sacraments she lost her hearing, sight, and use of reason. Since that time I have been very weak.⁷⁵

Father Martin, too, had some excitement on one or the other of his many mission trips. In the Civil War, Southern Kentucky in general sided with the South, Indiana with the North; the southern boundary line of Indiana, the Ohio, was the line of separation, but also of contact. Recovered from his illness, Father Martin again took over the week-end care of Tell City and Troy, on the northern bank of the Ohio. In 1864, he wrote to Father Gall of Einsiedeln:

On your feast day [October 16] I celebrated two High Masses and preached twice, one time in Troy, the other time in the Swiss town, Tell City. . . . The foregoing night [at Tell City], my life was in danger because an attack on the part of the Rebels from the Kentucky side was expected. At night, at half past eleven, there came a platoon of about thirty men with a cannon that they set up alongside the house where I was staying. One could hear other cannons thundering at a distance, and patrols marched in every direction. I did not think it worth while to arise before the cannon next to the house had been fired at least once; that was not done, and toward morning the guard left. I feared more for my horse and buggy than for my person: the Rebels are in need of horses; they would not harm a Catholic priest, though they would lynch a Methodist preacher. In the morning I felt refreshed and was glad that I had not allowed myself to be disturbed in my sleep.⁷⁶

The leisurely mission jaunts of those days were strenuous but had their attractions. Father Martin wrote of one of those trips:

I experienced many an adventure and shared many a bump with the Most Reverend Bishop. For ten years he had not dared to travel through the adjacent Perry County. . . . True, the hills are not as high [as near Einsiedeln], but cliff after cliff, small valleys cut through by stony creeks, woody declivities, and stony rubble are everywhere. Three good-sized parishes awaited for ten years the Bishop's Confirma-

⁷⁵ St. M. Ll. V, p. 636 (to the Dean, Sept. 9, 1854).

⁷⁶ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 950-951 (Oct. 26, 1864).

tion visit. The priest who is in charge of them had uselessly written letter upon letter. Finally I volunteered to lead the Bishop through this Promised Land with our horse and buggy. On October 21 I had our hardy Sam hitched up, a horse the Bishop honored by calling him Bayard, "who was without fear and without reproach." We left Ferdinand after a good breakfast, taking our dinner along in the traveling bag. We were headed for Leopold, 24 miles away. At the halfway point, we stopped in a deep, wooded ravine, skyward-reaching trees above us, and the rock-ribbed earth beneath us, and refreshed ourselves with a few choice pieces of turkey, bread, and a bottle of Catawba. We gave the remaining bread to our Sam, and, to strengthen him still more for his hardships, we at first poured some wine on it; but, as often as we offered it to him, he shook his head and turned away from it, which was of great edification to us.

After describing the edifying manner in which the people received their Bishop, Father Martin continued:

The Bishop found this reception much better than the one of ten years previous. At that time he had come up from Evansville by steamer and had landed at Derby; but there was nobody to receive him. Finally, he found a Catholic American whom he could persuade to lend him a horse—it was an old nag with a still older saddle and with a bridle of ropes. And when the Bishop inquired how he might send the horse back: "Oh, never mind. When you come to Leopold, just turn the beast loose. She is old enough to find the way home. I'll get the saddle and bridle sometime when I come to Leopold." So the American.⁷⁷

Father Fintan furnishes the best descriptions of ecclesiastical life in general, of parish life and work in particular, and of popular life, as well as of the monastic daily order. These would be worthy of being published separately; they are too extensive to be more than mentioned here.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 956 (to Father Gall, Oct. 19-Dec. 13, 1865).

⁷⁸ St. M. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 13 (letters to the Dean at Einsiedeln, Oct. 9, 1860; May 15, 1861; Oct. 22, 1861; Letter to Prior Athanasius, written at Terre Haute, but without date, to the Abbot, Terre Haute, Aug. 25, 1865).

Along with the spiritual and education work in their mission district the Benedictines were intent upon building churches and schools. As soon as Father Ulrich had taken charge of Ferdinand in 1853, he completed its poorly finished and furnished stone church. This same church was, from 1866 to 1868, enlarged by Father Chrysostom through the addition of three sections and an imposing tower.⁷⁹

In 1854, at the request of the Bishop of Louisville, Father Bede built a church in Hawesville, Kentucky, across from Cannelton, where Father Bede had residence.⁸⁰

In 1859, Father Chrysostom built the frame church in New Boston; he had started that mission.

The beginning of the parish of the Visitation, at Huntingburg, has points of special interest. The town had about 600 inhabitants, of whom only a few were Catholic; but on farms surrounding the town about fifty Catholic families lived. When these Catholics requested the Fathers to start a parish in the town, the Fathers through a confidential agent purchased property and paid for it with their money, in 1859; in 1860 the members of the new parish reimbursed them. Father Bede, at that time the Pastor at Jasper, foreseeing the future development of Huntingburg, recognized the importance of a Catholic church in the town. But he also saw that the building of such a church would be a delicate undertaking because of the several non-Catholic denominations, many adherents of which were expected to be antagonistic to the project. It was he who conducted the transactions; he likewise celebrated holy Mass for the first time at Huntingburg on October 20, 1859.

Father Bede diplomatically contrived to meet in an open assembly the various non-Catholic people of the town. The Lutheran church was offered him for that purpose. In a clear and winning speech lasting two hours, he explained to his audience the nature and the tenets of the Catholic Church. The result was that the Protestants not only created no opposition to the building of a Catholic church but that several even helped the project with contributions

⁷⁹ Albert Kleber, O.S.B., *Ferdinand, Indiana, 1840-1940*.

⁸⁰ St. M. Ll. V, p. 625 (Bede to the Abbot, July, 1854).

in money. Later, many of them came to the church to hear the Catholic sermons and to attend the divine service.⁸¹

In 1865 alone, the Benedictines built ten churches, of which three were in the Terre Haute district. Two of the ten churches were of stone masonry, three of brick, and the rest of wood.⁸² Of one of these churches, Father Martin, in 1866, wrote to the Dean of Einsiedeln, whose patron saint was St. Rupert and who had done much for St. Meinrad: "Last year I had a neat little church built in Yankeetown [later Redbrush], Warrick County, around which a new, flourishing parish has already gathered, which employs its own Catholic teacher and which is visited by us once a month."⁸³ In a subsequent letter he asked Father Rupert to procure a statue of his patron saint for the altar of this church. The beautiful statue, carved in wood, arrived only after the death of Father Rupert;⁸⁴ it still is the cherished heirloom of that church.

The stone church at Maria Hilf—Mariah Hill is the Post Office Department's version of "*Maria Hilf*"—was built, in 1865, around and over the old frame church. The old church remained in use for divine service during the construction of the new church. It was dismantled only after the new church was ready for use. There was no interruption of divine service.

The parish of St. Henry owes its existence to Father Chrysostom; he dedicated it to St. Henry out of regard for Abbot Henry of Einsiedeln. In 1862, Father Chrysostom began to organize the little parish. With the people's approval, he decided that the church should be the first building to be put up in the contemplated village. It took them three years to erect a stone church, ready for use in 1865.⁸⁵

A decade or so later, in the early eighties, the Benedictines built still other churches, such as the stone church at St. Anthony, the

⁸¹ St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1496 (Report of Fr. Bede to the Abbot, Jan., 1865).

⁸² St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 959 (Martin to the Abbot, Feast of St. Maurus, 1866).

⁸³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 14 (Martin to the Dean, June 7, 1866).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* (Octave of Pentecost, 1867).

⁸⁵ St. M. Ll. VI, p. 803 (Chrysostom to the Abbot, Jan. 25, 1866).

beautiful stone and brick church at Troy,⁸⁶ and the majestic church at Jasper,⁸⁷ not to mention others of more recent dates.

To this activity of constructing churches there is to be added the earlier history of a chapel that has endeared itself to many near and far; it is the shrine of Our Lady of Monte Cassino. A little less than a mile north of the present Archabbey buildings there arises above the Anderson Valley a high hill, topped by a roomy and fertile plateau, which Father Chrysostom, soon after his arrival, in 1855, named Monte Cassino.⁸⁸ As early as 1857, Father Isidor expressed the hope that the future monastery would be built "on Monte Cassino, which is the highest, broadest, and most beautiful hill."⁸⁹

In the autumn of 1857 one of the Fathers, probably Father Isidor, went to Monte Cassino with the students. To a big oak tree, about thirty feet southeast of the present south entrance of the grove, they attached a picture of the Immaculate Conception. It was a simple, black print in a black frame. Then Father Isidor blessed the picture. This was the formal, though humble, inauguration of the devotion to Our Lady of Monte Cassino, a devotion which before long became a favorite not only with the members of the monastery and the students but also with the people in general, especially during the Civil War.

The next step came on May 5, 1866: "Father Isidor, together with the students and seminarians, went up to Monte Cassino, there to erect a little frame chapel in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Father Isidor blessed the site and laid the cornerstone. The chapel was fourteen feet long and twelve feet wide." It took another day, May 7th, to finish it.⁹⁰

On July 11, and again later in the same year, Mother Alexia Lechner, from the Benedictine St. Walburga Convent, Covington,

⁸⁶ Albert Kleber, O.S.B., *St. Pius' Parish, Troy, Indiana, 1847-1947*.

⁸⁷ Albert Kleber, O.S.B., *St. Joseph Parish, Jasper, Indiana, Centenary, 1837-1937*.

⁸⁸ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Ildephons Zarn to the Dean of Einsiedeln, Nov. 19, 1874).

⁸⁹ St. M. Ll. X, p. 1139 (Isidor to the Abbot, July 2, 1857).

Kentucky, visited St. Meinrad. She expressed a desire of founding a convent on Monte Cassino. However, Abbot Henry, to whom Father Martin had recommended the plan, cautioned against it. And so Father Martin dropped the plan. A happy solution was found when, in August, 1867, the Sisters of Providence informed Father Chrysostom that they would no longer teach at Ferdinand and he procured four Sisters from St. Walburga Convent. Their arrival at Ferdinand on August 20, 1867, eventually led to the founding of the Benedictine Convent of the Immaculate Conception, at Ferdinand.⁹¹

The devotion of the people near and far gradually manifested itself in a request that a more worthy shrine be erected on Monte Cassino. "The people of the district by all means want a stone chapel of the Mother of God. By now a formal pilgrimage to the place has developed and, despite the stresses of a presidential election year, generous contributions are coming in." These offerings amounted to \$568.78.⁹² This sum, of course, defrayed only a part of the building expenses.

The monastery was making remote preparations for a permanent monastic building and an excellent quality of sandstone was found near the top of Monte Cassino. The first stones quarried were fittingly used for Mary's shrine. Bishop Maurice de St. Palais laid the foundation stone for the chapel on the feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, September 20, 1868.⁹³

In appearance this chapel was to resemble closely the European shrine of "Our Dear Lady of Einsiedeln" as it was from 1466 till

⁹⁰ J. Fl. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch*; St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Martin to the Dean, Jan. 13, 1863); *St. Meinrads Raben*, IV (Aug. 8, 1891. *Beilage zum St. Benedicts Panier*, III) *Unsere Lieben Frauen Kapelle zu Monte Cas[s]ino bei St. Meinrad*.

⁹¹ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 966; 976; 979; 982 (Martin to the Abbot, July 18, 1866; Oct. 17, 1866; Jan. 15, 1868); St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 13 (Abbot Henry to Fr. Martin, Aug. 26, 1866; Apr. 1, 1868).

⁹² St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 979 (Martin to the Abbot, June 5, 1868; *Special Journal for collections*, pp. 27-31).

⁹³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives. Copy of document to be deposited in the foundation stone; J. Fl. Sondermann, *Tage-Buch*. Erroneously, it would seem, he has "Sept. 21."

1611. The Fathers had seen a picture of that shrine in Father Gall Morel's *Legende von St. Meinrad und der Hofstatt von Einsiedeln*, 1861; the chief difference was that in the original the gables were of wood, whereas in the St. Meinrad replica the gables, too, were built of stone. The new chapel was to be fifty-two feet long, thirty feet wide, and twenty feet high. It was to contain a statue of the Blessed Virgin and Child; this statue, a beautiful piece of work done in wood, was imported from Switzerland and was to be placed above the altar.⁹⁴

On April 30, 1870, young and old were busy decorating the streets and the road leading up to the shrine. At noon of the following day, May 1, the Angelus bell sent its triple *Ave Maria* over the countryside, and then all the bells joined in: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us." As a long procession from Fulda approached, it was met and formally received by Father Fintan, the pastor of St. Meinrad. The bells announced Vesper service at one o'clock. After Vespers, Father Wolfgang, the House Superior during Father Martin's absence in Rome, blessed the statue.

Though the celebration had been announced only a short time before that day, a throng of about 2,000 had gathered and now arranged itself in an orderly procession: little boys, young men with insignia and waving banners; small girls, big girls, clad in white and crowned with wreaths and carrying flowers and inscriptions; then, lifted on high on the shoulders of alternate groups of four each of the girls, the statue of the queenly Mother and Child; then came the student body, the members of the community, and, finally, the men and women of the laity. Hymns and the occasional strains of the brass band, intermingled with the Rosary and the commanding voice of the cannon, gladdened the processional route to Monte Cassino.

The chapel had been adorned inside and outside with wreaths and flowers. The statue was placed over the altar during the chanting of Our Lady's song, the *Magnificat*, followed by the *Salve Regina*.

⁹⁴ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 14, folder 3 (Martin to the Dean, Aug. 5, 1868; cf. the same, Jan. 22 and April 10, 1868).



THE CONVENT OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, FERDINAND
Showing Additions of 1916 and of 1936

Then Father Eberhard Stadler, O.S.B., the pastor at Ferdinand, entered the pulpit, erected in the open, and preached, beginning with the text, "Behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." After the priestly blessing the procession, singing and praying, returned home.⁹⁵

For the time being, only the sanctuary section was finished; the rest was completed in 1873. The entrance is much more beautiful than the one shown on the picture of the original chapel in Europe.

In the winter of 1871-72, there was an epidemic of smallpox at St. Meinrad. Several people in the neighborhood of the monastery had died of smallpox, and four persons of the monastery were ill with the disease. Since the students seemed to be specially susceptible to it, the worst was feared. A house apart from the main buildings was reserved for those afflicted; the students promptly dubbed it "the pest house." Father Isidor wrote:⁹⁶

On January 4, when three or four had been cured and had moved out, the sick room was again filled with four persons, and in the dormitory several feared the arrival of the dreaded disease. On this occasion—and that for the first time—the school turned to the dear Mother of God on Monte Cassino. The students had carried the first picture up that hill and had with their own hands built the first frame chapel; and so we could hope that the dear Mother of God would help. Early on January 5, all the students who could walk made a pilgrimage to Monte Cassino, where we celebrated a Solemn Votive High Mass; likewise on the ninth day, at the end of the Novena [January 13]. Wonderful to say, already on the evening of the first day only two were left in the infirmary and since then no one else has been attacked by the disease; all are now healed and the smallpox has positively ceased here. All the inhabitants of the monastery and the students have been vaccinated.

Such is the origin of the annual pilgrimage that the school still makes to Monte Cassino on January 13.

⁹⁵ *Wahrheitsfreund*, Jhrg. 33, No. 40, 11 Mai, 1870.

⁹⁶ St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1200 (Isidor to Chrysostom, Jan. 19, 1872).

Since May, 1931, Monte Cassino has become for many far and near a shrine of special devotion. Every Sunday afternoon in May and October there are—provided the weather allows—a procession



THE CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF
MONTE CASSINO

and outdoor sermon, together with the recitation of special prayers. The stone pulpit in front of the chapel was constructed in 1952.

Many favors have been reported in answer to devotion at this shrine. The shrine is cherished not only by the members of the mon-

astery and of the school but by many of the faithful at large. An appropriate little verse, composed by one of the Fathers, was chiseled into one of the stone posts of the main entrance to the grove when this was enlarged, in 1932:

"Here, with Mother, rest a span;
Then go thy way a better man."⁹⁷

Near the end of the previous period of the history of St. Meinrad, Father Chrysostom wrote to his brother, the Abbot of Muri-Gries: "Up until now we have always walked the *via Crucis*, and God alone knows when the *via Lucis* will begin for St. Meinrad."⁹⁸ But before the period described in the present chapter was over, Father Martin could write to the Abbot at Einsiedeln: "It becomes ever clearer to me that God's hand has been in all things that have come about in our American colony, and I should like to apply to it the words that on the day before yesterday we repeated often in the divine office: "Gladly I will glory in my infirmities, that the strength of Christ may dwell in me."⁹⁹

⁹⁷ On the corresponding post on the opposite side of the entrance is the equivalent of this verse in German:

"Ruh' dich hier bei Mutter aus;
Dann geh' als bess'rer Mensch nach Haus."

⁹⁸ St. M. Ll. XII, p. 1427 (Feb., 1859).

⁹⁹ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 962-963 (Jan. 27, 1866).

CHAPTER VII

ST. MEINRAD, AN ABBEY (SEPTEMBER 30, 1870); MARTIN MARTY, ITS FIRST ABBOT (SEPTEMBER 30, 1870—FEBRUARY 3, 1880)

BOTH EINSIEDELN and St. Meinrad felt increasingly that the continued long-distance control would prevent the young foundation from attaining the fullness of life of a Benedictine monastery. That feeling gradually developed into a conviction, and the conviction resulted in a mutual co-operation toward obtaining for St. Meinrad full canonical independence.

Father Martin must have had that ultimate step in mind, for on February 22, 1861, he inquired of Abbot Boniface Wimmer, of St. Vincent's Abbey, what procedure he had adopted when in the beginning he accepted candidates for investing and profession, and what Rome would stipulate, especially as to personnel and property, "for the erection of a monastery."¹ Writing to the Abbot of Einsiedeln, Father Martin spoke of "very interesting and instructive conversations with Abbot Boniface" during their attendance at the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore.²

On November 18, 1867, Abbot Boniface, as President of the American-Cassinese Congregation and in compliance with a resolution of the General Chapter that had been held in August, sent the dear confreres in Indiana a hearty greeting and welcome. . . . As sons of the same great Father, as children of

¹ Letter in St. Vincent Archabbey archives.

² St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 967-968 (Baltimore, October 17, 1866).

the same illustrious family we also have the same interests and aspirations and hence also share in common the mutual successes. It is no longer news to you that we, the Bavarian Benedictines, now fully organized as a congregation, can now without disturbance develop ourselves on a sure basis From now on nothing stands any longer in the way of the multiplication of our Abbeys if real estate [sufficient for subsistence] and the necessary personnel are at hand.

We are sincerely glad to hear from all sides that your Prioxy has developed into so flourishing a state and that the number of your confreres has increased so much that you must give thought to having it raised to the status of an Abbey and that likely only your humility has prevented you from petitioning the Apostolic See to that effect. . . . The Abbot can do more than the Prior. I should therefore like to counsel you not to carry your modesty too far, that is, not to let it go so far as to be to the detriment of the Order, but to procure the establishment of the Abbey, as I also had to do even at the risk of being accused of ambition. . . . It lies with you whether the common bond of one congregation will some day join us still more closely.

Abbot Boniface even offered Father Martin the services of his agent at the Holy See for the accomplishment of this undertaking.³

In these suggestions Abbot Boniface overlooked that his departure from his monastery, at Metten, which had belonged to the suppressed Bavarian Congregation, differed from the departure of the founders of St. Meinrad from Einsiedeln; with the consent and blessing of the Holy See, Einsiedeln had heartily given the founders a canonical mission. Further, Boniface Wimmer had dealt directly with the Holy See in having St. Vincent made an Abbey, which later, though retaining the Statutes of the former Bavarian Congregation, he affiliated with the Cassinese Congregation; he accordingly organized his foundations as the American-Cassinese Congregation.

St. Meinrad, however, had no thought of taking any step toward its canonical establishment as an Abbey except by way of Einsiedeln;

³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 14, folder, *Boniface Wimmer*, Abbot (Nov. 18, 1867).

that, indeed, was the normal procedure. Accordingly, Father Martin merely thanked Abbot Boniface for his encouraging advice, and then sent Abbot Boniface's letter, without any comment of his own, to the Abbot of Einsiedeln.⁴

Replying, Abbot Henry wrote that Abbot Boniface was trying to put "abbatial lice" on Father Martin. "Who has a mind for them? How glad I should be to give you mine." Yet, he continued, in view of the precarious situation of the monasteries in many parts of Europe it would not be a bad idea to have a place of refuge in some other part of the world. Father Martin should consult with the senior Fathers whether they thought Abbot Boniface's suggestion of sufficient importance; when and under what conditions it might be acted upon; and what agent might transact the business with the Holy See.⁵

This letter the Abbot followed up with another, on July 23. In view of the fact that an Ecumenical Council was to be convened in Rome toward the end of the subsequent year, 1869, which all the Bishops and Abbots were ordered to attend, Father Martin might also find it useful to go to Rome, the Abbot wrote; there, together with Abbot Boniface and Abbot Henry, he could carefully confer about this monastic affair. To that effect they would beforehand need to have an understanding on these points:

1. Do we really want the elevation of the Daughter House to an Independent Abbey;
2. Do we want to join into one Congregation with the other Benedictine monasteries of the country; and, eventually,
3. How can this be brought about, and what should in this affair be proposed to the Holy See?

The Fathers at St. Meinrad should consult among themselves, the Abbot said; it would also be well to consult with Abbot Boniface and to have an understanding with the Bishop. Some kind of arrangement with the Bishop would be almost necessary, for, the Abbot pointed out, he (the Abbot) had already received hints from

⁴ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 976 (January 15, 1868).

⁵ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 13, folder, *Abbot Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot to Martin, April 1, 1868).

Rome that in the transactions and reforms of the coming Council the Bishops were to be granted more influence and intervention in monastic discipline. This consultation should be expedited so that the whole plan could in due time be placed before the Chapter at Einsiedeln and so that other consultations might eventually be arranged.⁶

Pursuant to these instructions, eight of the Fathers at St. Meinrad met in Chapter, which, with a recess at noon, lasted four and a half hours; the few Fathers who were absent had previously given their opinion. There was perfect unanimity on the points proposed:

1. Do we want the elevation of our Daughter House to an independent Abbey?

Although our connection with our Motherhouse has up until now been neither burdensome nor harmful, still it seems to us to lie in the nature of the affair that the independence of the institute be sought as soon as possible. Through the profession of solemn vows and through their own election of their superiors, together with the final decision of the affairs vital to them in their own hands, its members will be placed on their own feet, the undertaking will really become their own affair and thus their whole love and earnest endeavor will be won for it. An Abbey seems more desirable than a Priory because it is more in keeping with the ancient tradition and is a better basis for future foundations.

The material possessions, together with other sources of income, were found sufficient for the continued subsistence of the foundation. The requirements of twelve clerical members could also be met, inasmuch as Fathers Wolfgang, Isidor, Fintan, and Martin were willing to transfer their vow of stability "from the old to the new Meinrad's-Cell" to join with the other eight, of whom four were priests, two subdeacons, and two had minor orders. Besides these there were five Frater Novices and several Brothers. These four Fathers from Einsiedeln judged that by permanently transferring

⁶ *Ibid.*

their vow of stability the ancient monastic traditions would be more securely transplanted to, and preserved in, the new foundation.⁷

2. Do we in addition want a congregational connection with the other Benedictine monasteries in the country?

The answer to this question was a unanimous "No," and that for reasons of filial piety toward our Motherhouse and the Swiss Congregation—we, young and old, having been schooled according to its Statutes. Further, we have the gravest objections to the Bavarian Statutes, inasmuch as these prescribe a common Novitiate and House of Studies, so that the transfer of religious from one monastery to another might readily be made; wherefore the vow of stability is already at profession to be modified to that effect.

Therefore the Chapter at St. Meinrad desired that Rome be petitioned to permit the new Abbey either to remain connected with the Swiss Congregation or to constitute a separate—the American-Einsiedeln-Congregation, retaining the Swiss *Statutes*, even as Abbot Boniface, in 1865, received permission to erect the American-Casinese Congregation, using the Bavarian *Statutes*. "Our Ordinary would agree to that, but would not like to see us join with Abbot Boniface."

3. How can this be done and what should be proposed to the Holy See?

St. Meinrad thought that it would be best if the Abbot of Einsiedeln would approach the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith with a petition supplemented with the requisite documents and reminding their Eminences of the promise given by the Congregation on November 22, 1852, namely, that when the foundation would have reached the proper stage, "the authority of the Apostolic See would not be found wanting to it."⁸

On September 19, 1868, Abbot Boniface again counseled that,

⁷ This transfer was formally effected in a document signed by the four, on September 8, 1870. St. M. Ll. III, p. 267; cf. explanatory letter of Martin to the Dean, September 8, 1870, *ibid.*, p. 268.

⁸ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 979-982 (Martin to the Abbot, August 25, 1868); St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 13 (the Abbot to Martin, November 19, 1868).

for the good of the Order and for the strengthening of itself, St. Meinrad with the permission of the Abbot of Einsiedeln join the American-Cassinese Congregation, whereupon the necessary steps would be taken to have St. Meinrad made an Abbey.⁹ Yet St. Meinrad continued to negotiate by way of Einsiedeln.

After mature deliberations and careful revisions Einsiedeln sent the form of petition to St. Meinrad, with the request that the Bishop's approval and support be obtained for it or that he at least declare that the elevation of the Priory to an Abbey was desirable and that he would grant the latter the same liberties that he had granted the former in the agreement of May 1, 1855.

However, though approached repeatedly, the Bishop of Vincennes made no reply. Father Bede finally told him: "To impede the logical development of the Benedictine monastery amounts to expelling its members."¹⁰ On his way to the Vatican Council the Bishop had at Einsiedeln even expressed himself unfavorably about St. Meinrad's being made an Abbey. Father Martin, informed of this, took sharp issue with the Bishop's opinion. According to Father Martin the Bishop had no grievance against anyone in particular at St. Meinrad but was averse to monachism in general by reason of its monastic exemption, which prevented him from disposing of such religious at will. "His proposition as to Detroit has proceeded from this twofold motive, *promoveatur ut amoveatur*." Peter Paul LeFevre, coadjutor and administrator of the Diocese of Detroit had died on March 4, 1869, and it seems that Bishop de St. Palais had proposed Father Martin, the mainstay of St. Meinrad, for that position; the latter's removal from St. Meinrad would have interfered greatly with the plan of making St. Meinrad an Abbey.¹¹

Father Martin had not intended to go to Rome for the Council; but having become more confirmed in his opinion that the Bishop would make efforts in Rome to oppose the elevation of St. Meinrad to the status of an Abbey, he resolved to go there to present and up-

⁹ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 985-986 (Abbot Boniface to Martin).

¹⁰ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 993-994 (Martin to the Abbot, "end of Dec." 1869).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

hold the other side of the question. He sailed from New York on October 16, 1869. Though not surprised at the Bishop's presentation of the affair—which presentation, so Father Martin was convinced, was not in accordance with the facts—he felt confident that at Rome he could within a few weeks bring the matter to a successful issue—if the Sacred Congregation would deal at all during the Council with such affairs.¹²

That the Bishop had continued even in Rome in his unfavorable attitude is indicated in a letter that on November 11, 1870, the Very Reverend John Corbe, Vicar General, wrote to Father Martin: "I don't know why the Monseigneur said the things that they say he did, and I am sorry that he manifested a certain displeasure toward you at Rome."¹³

To appreciate the contents of the letter that Abbot Henry wrote to Father Martin on October 29, 1870,¹⁴ one must keep in mind the ecclesiastical excitement that summer—during the height of the Vatican Council and the political turmoil—when on September 8 the Piedmontese invaded the Papal States and on September 20 took Rome:

Finally, after so many worries and labors, I am able to send you an authentic report and communication about our mission business that in its time we laid before the Propaganda. Everyone who knew of it told me that under the circumstances a dispatch of it might not be expected from that quarter. Even our active chargé d'affaires at the Holy See remarked to me not long ago that we would never get anything from the Propaganda, because it was swamped with other affairs. When I replied that despite the present disturbances I do not give up my hope, because the procedure we had followed was the only right one . . . he answered with a roguish mien: "You'll see; you'll see!" . . . How surprised I was when shortly thereafter I re-

¹² St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 992-995 (Martin to the Abbot, end of October, 1869; end of December, 1869; Feb. 9, 1870).

¹³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 10. Among the letters of Bishop M. de St. Palais.

¹⁴ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 13, folder, *Abbot Henricus Schmid*.

ceived the information from my agent, Abbot Pescetelli, in S. Callisto, that the Propaganda had taken a unanimous resolution, that this already was approved by the Holy Father, and now was only to be worked out in due form. He added that our wishes were fully met—yes, that even more was granted than we could expect, as, for instance, that the Holy Father also leaves the election of the first Abbot to the respective Chapter, reserving to himself only the confirmation. Finally, a few days ago, I received the brief in question, done on parchment, dated at Rome, at St. Peter, under the Fisherman's Ring, on September 30, 1870. From it you will see that the Holy Father wanted to obviate every deviation in regard to the presidency at the election by determining for this the Bishop of the diocese, but only as *delegatus* and with the reservation that the acta of the election be sent to him for approval, as is the custom with the Consistorial Abbots of the Mother Monastery.

As I do not think it advisable to entrust this original document to the mail, I have taken care to have a copy, perfectly identical in form and contents, made of it and provided with every necessary legalization, which will have the same worth and validity as the original itself.

An Apostolic Notary had in due form declared the copy authentic.

The Papal Brief decreed: (1) that St. Meinrad be erected an Abbey without territory *nullius dioecesis*; (2) that the monks now joined to this monastery, or to be joined to it in the future, be understood to form a Benedictine congregation of their own, under title of the "Swiss-American Congregation"; (3) that besides the common Rule of St. Benedict this congregation be governed in accordance with the proper constitutions of the Swiss-American Congregation; (4) that this same congregation be accounted adjoined to, or affiliated with, the Swiss-Benedictine Congregation; (5) that the election of the Abbot be committed to the Chapter, presided over by the Bishop as the delegate of the Holy See; (6) that the Abbot be entitled to all the rights and privileges that in the Order of St. Benedict are known to be proper to an Abbot without a territory *nullius* and which are defined by the previously mentioned Constitutions of the Swiss-

Benedictine Congregation; (7) that, with regard to the care of souls, keeping in mind especially the circumstances of the country concerned the Benedictine family is to observe what has been laid down for the missions in general, besides observing the general norms of ecclesiastical law; (8) that, finally, if it should come about that secular clerics be for the sake of studies enrolled in the monastic school, the Bishop also partake of the right to concern himself with their doctrine and morals.

Since this was the only document forthcoming, it is not surprising that Abbot Henry as well as his agent at the Holy See, Abbot Pescetelli, concluded that the Holy See had granted the Chapter of the new Abbey the extraordinary right to elect even its first Abbot.

St. Meinrad rejoiced at the successful issue of events in its behalf. When Father Martin heard that the Bishop had returned from his trip to Europe, he went without delay to Vincennes to acquaint him with the Papal Brief and to ascertain whether January 23, 1871, would be agreeable to him as the day of election of the Abbot, at which he was to preside as the delegate of the Holy See. Father Martin found the Bishop in poor health and apparently not pleased with the contents of the Brief. The Bishop took special exception to the fact that not the original Brief but only an authenticated copy thereof was shown him; yet he finally consented to come to St. Meinrad.

On January 21 Fathers Benedict Brunet, Meinrad Maria McCarthy, Henry Hug, Fidelis Maute, Placidus Zarn, and Benno Gerber, and Fraters Maurus Helfrich, Boniface Dilger, Jerome Hund, and Athanasius Rumig made their solemn vows.¹⁵

On January 23 Bishop Maurice de St. Palais celebrated a Pontifical High Mass *de Spiritu Sancto*, at which all the Chapter Members received Holy Communion from his hands.¹⁶

After Mass all the solemnly professed members of the new Abbey assembled in Chapter for the intended election; there were fourteen members: the four who had transferred their vow of stability

¹⁵ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 997 (Martin to the Abbot, Dec. 25, 1870).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, III, p. 274 (Chrysostom to the Abbot, January 23, 1871).

from Einsiedeln to St. Meinrad (Martin Marty, the Prior; Wolfgang Schlumpf, the Subprior; Isidor Hobi, and Fintan Mundwiler); and the ten previously mentioned. Fathers Bede O'Connor, Chrysostom Foffa, and Eberhard Stadler, who had not transferred their vow of stability, were present, but the first merely as a notary, the other two as witnesses. The Bishop presided.

At the first balloting, thirteen of the fourteen votes were for Father Martin. Immediately after his acceptance, Abbot Marty, as a token of filial piety toward Einsiedeln and as an expression of appreciation for the work that Fathers Bede, Chrysostom, and Eberhard had done for St. Meinrad, granted them full Chapter rights, with active and passive vote, at St. Meinrad, though they had chosen to remain Capitulars of Einsiedeln.¹⁷ Then all conducted the new Abbot to the church to receive the obeisance of the Community.

"The Bishop," so wrote the new Abbot to the Abbot of Einsiedeln,¹⁸ "seemed to be a new man. . . . at table he proposed a toast to the new Abbey, and his concluding words were, 'the welfare of St. Meinrad is also the welfare of the Diocese, and the joy of this community will ever be the joy of the Bishop of Vincennes.'"¹⁹

On the next day, Abbot Martin appointed Father Fintan Prior and Father Wolfgang, "the excellent oeconome," Subprior.

The sixth Sunday after Easter, May 21, was determined upon as the day for the Solemn Blessing of the Abbot.

The Abbot of Einsiedeln, together with all the members of the Mother Monastery, was overjoyed with the turn of events; he wrote to the Abbot-elect:²⁰

Who a short time ago could have even surmised that the mission work that we had begun in the State of Indiana, a

¹⁷ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 997 (Martin to Abbot Henry, January 24, 1871); *ibid.*, III, p. 274 (Chrysostom to Abbot Henry, January 23, 1871).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, VIII, p. 998 (January 24, 1871).

¹⁹ This friendly attitude of the Bishop toward St. Meinrad continued, as his subsequent letters to the Abbot make manifest.

²⁰ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (April 15, 1871).

work so sorely tried by so many vicissitudes, would ever arrive at the point at which it now stands!

You are quite right when you say that this undertaking has cost me more work, worry, and cares than few—yes, you might have said, than anyone—could fathom.

But away with such reminiscences. Let us look ahead in order to preserve what the dear God has put into our hands. There are especially three pillars that support the building:

1. a firm trust in God, that will sustain you in all storms;
2. a faithful fulfilment of duty, which makes you worthy of His protection;
3. fraternal charity, which is the best means to lighten the work for one another and together to bear the burden and the heat of the day. As long as nothing is wanting in this triad, so long will the blessing of God also not be wanting.

Abbot Henry had not only words of encouragement for the Daughter Abbey and its first Abbot, but he also had some valuable gifts. He sent an antique crosier, that had belonged to the ancient Abbey of Rheinau which had been dissolved in 1862. Abbot Henry had the crosier renovated and remounted and had used it on Holy Thursday of that year. Several persons had requested him never to let that work of art leave the monastery. He also sent an antique pectoral cross of exquisite workmanship, with olive-green chrysolites, a relic of St. Meinrad, and the inscription, *S. Meinradus filiis transmarinis*. (These two pieces still are cherished heirlooms at St. Meinrad.) Abbot Henry further gave the new abbot a gold-braided pectoral cord that the Visitor of the Cassinese Congregation had given him for his feast day; a new precious miter, antique in form, with artistic needle work, including the pictures of the Blessed Virgin and of St. Martin; two pairs of white and of red pontifical stockings; two pairs of white and red pontifical gloves; a chasuble, together with a stole, etc.; a pair of pontifical slippers; an alb that had belonged to the late Cardinal Reisach and that the Abbot had purchased in Rome; two rings, one for daily use, the other to be worn over the glove.—Some few other articles were added. However, to



MITER AND CROSIER

Gifts of Abbot Henry to Abbot Martin. The Crosier from the
Secularized Abbey of Rheinau

the disappointment of everybody concerned, the shipment arrived too late to be used at the blessing of the Abbot.²¹

Out of deference to the Bishop, Abbot Henry on January 21 sent the original of the apostolic brief to St. Meinrad.²²

Then, on February 28, as the Abbot-Elect opened a letter from the Abbot of Einsiedeln, his eyes met a superscription that stood even ahead of the date—an adaptation of a pronouncement well known in the tradition of Einsiedeln: "*Cessa, frater, cessa! Electio iamdiu facta est.*" ("Stop, brother, stop! The electing has already been done, and that a long time ago.") When Abbot Henry wrote that letter, he did not yet know that an election had already been held at St. Meinrad, at which Father Martin had been elected. He went on to say that he had just then received an apostolic brief from the Propaganda, by which the Holy Father himself had appointed the first Abbot of St. Meinrad—and not, as was the custom, for only three years, but for life; this second brief had been given under the same date as the one by which St. Meinrad was made an Abbey; but, due to an oversight in those days of upheaval in Rome, it had lain unnoticed for four months in the *Cancellaria Brevium*.

From this brief it was plain that the regulation of the election of an Abbot for St. Meinrad laid down in the first brief referred only to the future ones, the Holy Father himself electing, according to custom, the first Abbot also in the case of St. Meinrad's Abbey. But, providentially, both the Holy Father in Rome and the Monastic Chapter in far away St. Meinrad had elected the same man—Father Martin Marty, O.S.B.

As the day for the Solemn Blessing of the Abbot approached, preparations for it were intensified. Since the space in the church would have been too limited, a large platform for the two altars

²¹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 13, folder, *Abbot Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot to Bede, March 27, 1871; April 11, 1871); St. M. Ll. V, p. 719 (Bede to Abbot Henry, June 14, 1871); VIII, p. 1003 (Abbot Martin to Abbot Henry, July 20, 1871).

²² St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 8, (St. Meinrad's Abbey, 1870, *Erectio*).

and thrones and for the visiting clergy, the members of the community, and the students, was erected in front of the entrance. The faithful from near and far were to be grouped about this platform.

On May 21 "a mighty throng" of people had gathered to take part in the historic solemnity. Maurice de St. Palais, Bishop of the



ABBOT MARTIN MARTY, O.S.B. 1870-1879

Diocese of Vincennes, was the officiating prelate; he was assisted by Abbot Boniface Wimmer, of St. Vincent's Abbey, and by Abbot Benedict, of the Trappist Abbey, Gethsemani, Kentucky. Father Otto Jair, O.S.F., preached from nine to ten o'clock, and then the pontifical services began, to the more prominent parts of which the deep and loud-throated cannons on the opposite hill added their emphatic "Amen." The services lasted until after one o'clock.

Instead of the customary reading at dinner, Father Chrysostom addressed the new Abbot in a well-worded speech in Latin. After addresses by several other speakers, "Father Chrysostom," to quote the chronicler, "arose again and in the name of all the parishioners, grouped in a wide circle about the building, in his powerful voice intoned a gigantic *Lebehoch* to the Bishop." Father Isidor's golden humor repaid the assembly that had coaxed him into an unscheduled speech. After Abbot Martin had spoken words of gratitude to the Bishop and to other guests and especially to Einsiedeln, the Bishop arose to give expression to the joy that the day had brought him. For today, he said, he saw his wishes and prayers heard. He had requested monks from Einsiedeln for this territory because he was convinced that this territory was destined to be Catholic and to be inhabited by persons of German origin. He stressed that he would do all he could to procure the welfare of St. Meinrad.

After the dinner, the men of eight of the parishes in charge of the Benedictines assembled to pass a resolution of thanks to the Holy Father for having made St. Meinrad an Abbey, to protest against the violence that the Italian revolutionaries had committed against the Holy See, and to take up a collection for the Holy Father. The collection amounted to \$500, to which the Abbey added \$500 as its contribution.

Together with his own and the community's expression of devotedness and gratitude to the Holy Father, Abbot Martin forwarded the donations to Abbot Henry, who, as Abbot of the Mother Abbey, through his agent, Abbot Pescetelli, presented everything to the Holy Father. In the audience the Holy Father spoke in commendatory terms both of Einsiedeln and of St. Meinrad.²³

²³ St. M. Ll. III, pp. 275-279 (Report of Father Jerome Hund, O.S.B.), *Wahrheits-freund*, Jhrg. 34, No. 44, June 4, 1871; St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 1000 (Abbot Martin to Abbot Henry, May 22, 1871); *Ibid.*, III, pp. 279-280 (Address to the H. Father, Einsiedeln, August 8, 1871).

CHAPTER VIII

ACHIEVEMENTS. MISTAKES.

(BUILDING. EDUCATION. MONASTIC LIFE. THE ROMAN BREVIARY.)

FROM 1864 on, the Fathers had been considering more permanent buildings for St. Meinrad. For a while they entertained the thought of building on the spacious plateau at the top of the nearby hill called Monte Cassino, but they finally decided upon the steep and narrow ridge rising 30 feet above the elevation of the old monastery on the northeastern spur of the same ridge. The general direction of the main ridge curves from north northeast to south southeast.

For several years deliberations concerning these plans were conducted by correspondence between St. Meinrad and Einsiedeln.¹

In 1867 Father Martin informed the Abbot that he had advanced money or property to several craftsmen and others to enable them to settle in St. Meinrad; they were to make return for money or property thus advanced by working on the future building of the monastery. Except for obligations already pledged, Father Martin discontinued that policy when the Abbot disapproved of it, pointing to unpleasant experiences that Einsiedeln had had under such arrangements. St. Meinrad was to have similar experiences.²

When toward the close of 1869 the erection of St. Meinrad as an

¹ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 950-960 (Martin to the Abbot, Jan. 15, 1866); p. 963 (the same, Apr. 23, 1866); p. 969 (the same, Jan. 18, 1867).

² St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 975 (Martin to the Abbot, Jan. 15, 1868); St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbas Henricus Schmid*, (Apr. 1, 1868).

Abbey seemed very likely, preparations for building were intensified. Fortunately, St. Meinrad had at hand nearly all the raw materials for a substantial building; it did not have to rely on costly transportation by railroad.³

Father Wolfgang, who was in charge of the building activity, has left an account of that work.⁴

The top of the ridge had to be lowered by about 24 feet to obtain a level building site. Fifty kegs of powder were used to blast the harder layers, from which a sandstone sufficiently hard to serve as building material for the inner walls of the basement was obtained; the stones for the outside walls were quarried on Monte Cassino. More than 1000 saw logs were cut from the monastery woods; some others were bought; others were donated by some of the farmers. A good part of this lumber was used for the construction, in 1869, of a stable, 300 feet long, for cattle and horses.

The Fathers had decided to use brick from the stone basement upwards. And so a brickyard was laid out between the vineyard (which dated from 1868) and the present pigsties. 1,200,000 bricks were burned. After the bricks were finished, a quantity of flat tiles were burned for the roof of the new monastery, in 1873. Unfortunately, many of the tiles were warped through inexperienced workmanship. Wooden shingles were consequently used for the main building. There were serviceable tiles enough only for the annex from the east front southward.

The outside wall around the whole square of buildings was to measure 536 feet and 57 feet from the ground to the cornice; 73 feet to the top of the center wing.

The rough ashlars (mostly 4, some 6, and the window sills

³ The first mention of a railroad to pass through—or close by—St. Meinrad was in 1858. Next, on May 15, 1867, there was legally constituted the Anderson Valley Railroad Company. The road was to connect Huntingburg, Ferdinand, St. Meinrad, Troy, and Tell City. See the *Constitutionen und Nebengesetze der Anderson-Thal Eisenbahngesellschaft*. 1867. But the project made no further progress.

⁴ St. M. Ll. III, pp. 280-284 (Report to Einsiedeln, Jan. 21, 1874).

even 8 feet long, many 2 feet wide and from 15 to 18 inches high) were hand-dressed at the building site.

The Brothers burned 1400 barrels of lime from limestone obtained about 4 miles toward Ferdinand. Mixed with sand from the Anderson, this lime made an excellent mortar. Two wells were dug to obtain water needed for slaking the lime, mixing the mortar, and for use of man and beast.

On the afternoon of May 2, 1872, Abbot Martin, in the presence of the community but without solemnity, blessed and laid the first stone for the foundation of the southeast corner of the east front; but the official foundation stone, which was to connect the northeast corner with the crypt of the church, was laid by the Bishop on September 14, 1872.

The solemnity attending the laying of the cornerstone was even greater than that for the blessing of the Abbot. There were festoons and festive arches along the streets of the town and up to the monastery. Early in the morning, crowds of people arrived from the various parishes attended by the Benedictines. They gathered first in front of the old church to listen to a well-preached sermon by Father Aegidius Hennemann, O.S.B., from St. Boniface Monastery, Munich. Then the procession formed and marched up to the new building. There Father Bede, preaching from an elevated platform, for 45 minutes held his vast audience "spell-bound," according to the report of a secular priest, Peter McMahon, who did not hesitate to call the sermon "a masterpiece." After this sermon the Bishop blessed and laid the cornerstone and then celebrated a Pontifical High Mass on a temporary altar erected over the spot where the main altar was later to be erected.⁵

Delighted with the appearance of the basement walls, built of sandstone quarried on Monte Cassino, the Bishop and Father Bede urged the Fathers to use that stone for the whole building. And so

⁵ St. M. Archabbey archives, drawer 8, folder, *Laying of the Cornerstone of the New Monastery* (letter of the Rev. Peter McMahon to Father Henry Hug, O.S.B., Sept. 23, 1872).

the Fathers decided to use brick only for the inner walls above the basement and as backing for the outer walls.

The center structure on the east side, 33 feet wide and 73 feet long, was to have a fourth story, which was to serve as a chapel until, later, at least the crypt of the church would be added to the north end of the east front. During that spring and summer the basement walls had been built; they were all of sandstone and were 3 feet thick and 10 feet high. At the first floor the outside walls were 6 inches less on their inner side, so that there could be a ledge on which the floor joists could rest.

Begun again during Easter week, 1873, the work was pushed even more energetically. A Solemn High Mass, with a sermon, opened the building season. When the walls of the first floor were finished, an inclined plane was constructed, up which oxen pulled heavy stones and other building material, for no derrick or hoist was available. That procedure was repeated for the second and third floor.

The last two months of building, November and December of that year (1873), were quite exciting. Rain and snow and a cutting north wind and frost put the workmen out of sorts. The foreman of the masons said that the stones were too heavy and that the workers were consequently discouraged. The foreman of the carpenters declared that unless every man under his direction received a drink of whisky every hour, they would all make off. He added that the masons were of the same mind. This remedy was tried the next day, inasmuch as each man was given one drink of whisky in the forenoon and one in the afternoon, but was never more repeated.

Instead of this spirituous agreement with his workmen, Father Wolfgang made a spiritual one with the Poor Souls in purgatory: for a Rosary that he would pray daily during Advent for the deceased confreres from Einsiedeln and from St. Meinrad they were to send him some of the warmth from purgatory.

Two days later, snow fell, and the foreman of the masons said he wanted to go home, to Leopold. Father Wolfgang allowed him to do so. But when others also asked to quit work, he positively re-

fused, telling them that he would not settle with anyone until the job was done. That afternoon only three or four put in their appearance. Father Wolfgang urged them to start work. "John, here is a broom. Off with the snow." "Paulie, get the ox drivers." The ox drivers came. "But the oxen cannot walk!" "Use the whip. . . . On with the work." The masons downtown heard the racket and all but one man returned to work; a few days later their foreman also came.

Indian summer favored them with an encore, and the warmth of its smile became contagious; even two electric storms helped to put new life into the crew. Three yoke of oxen constantly dragged the stones up the steep inclined plane to the third floor; another team followed with the mortar wagon; horses hauled the bricks; three yoke of oxen sturdily strained at the wagon with the heavy roof timber. In addition to the hired workers, everybody helped: Brothers, Novices, Candidates, students, and, above all, Father Wolfgang. They carried, wheeled, pushed, pulled the material—even the heaviest stones—from the third floor up to the top of the center section, which was a floor higher than the rest of the building and inaccessible to the teams. It was a back-breaking task; but Father Wolfgang urged on: "Don't mind that!" "Hearty, there!" "On with it!" "It'll soon be finished."

Finally, on December 19 of the same year (1873), at exactly noon, the hill trembled from the thunder of the cannons announcing that the last stone was laid.

As soon as the masons had finished the walls of a section, the carpenters immediately erected the roof trusses; they finished with the last one that afternoon.

The roofers, in turn, had taken over a section when the carpenters had moved on; they nailed the last shingle by the flickering light of a lantern, on Sylvester-eve.

This majestic building, serenely overlooking the Anderson Valley, was a monument to the energy of the sons of St. Benedict, who with the simple means at hand had constructed it in the solitude of the backwoods.

But so far only the east front was built; the west front and the wing joining the east to the west front, and the building of the church were to be done later. But the church, originally planned to have its front entrance toward the north, was never built, excepting the crypt, which was ready for use by spring, 1885; this was used also by the parish.

The work on the interior of the main building had progressed enough to allow the first and the second floors to be occupied in September, 1874. After Prime on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Abbot gave orders that on that day all should get their belongings together and move up into the new building. On that day the Conventual High Mass was celebrated for the first time in the chapel of the new monastery. This chapel occupied the whole top story of the center cross section.⁶

The building, of imposing exterior, left much to be desired in its interior arrangement and equipment. There were two bedsteads in each room for two Fathers; until the first part of November of 1873 the Fraters and the Brothers laid their straw mattresses on the floor of the dormitory on the second floor; by that time a two-story brick building, joined to the south side of the main building, was finished. This building served to house shops and living quarters for the Brothers. An addition to this annex was built in 1876.

Up till Michaelmas, 1874, the community continued to take its meals in the old building. On that day the two iron cook stoves were dismantled and put up in the kitchen of the new building. The kitchen was a part of the southern end of the present monastic refectory. The bakery was underneath, in the southeastern corner of the basement. But when a fire was built, to cook dinner, there was no draft, and smoke filled the kitchen. And so the stove pipe was connected with the bakery chimney. That arrangement worked somewhat better; but since the chimney was just big enough for the bakery,

⁶ The details of the transfer from the old building to the new were related to the author, in 1944, by Brother Philip Ketterer, O.S.B., (born, Feb. 3, 1857; arrived at St. Meinrad, May 19, 1873; professed, Dec. 24, 1874; died, Dec. 20, 1950).

the additional function exacted from it greatly lessened its effectiveness; at times the kitchen would be so full of smoke that the cooks could scarcely see one another.

Young Brother Giles Laugel, who felt they were not getting anywhere merely by reporting that there was too much smoke in the kitchen, finally opened the door leading into the corridor. The smoke pressed slowly through the corridor, then more rapidly up the stairway to the Abbot's room. That was Brother Giles' way of calling the Abbot—he sent him a smoke signal. "I want to show the Abbot," he told Brother Philip, "how things look in the kitchen." The Abbot, smelling the smoke and thinking that the house was on fire, hurried in the direction from which the smoke was coming. "What's the matter here?" When he understood, he took steps to have the trouble remedied; but it was not until January, 1878, that a range, together with the requisite cooking utensils, was imported from Switzerland and installed—at great expense.⁷

Father Wolfgang had made provision for heating by having a stove in an opening of the partition wall between every two rooms, so that each stove could heat two rooms. They were fueled from the corridor, where wood for the stoves was stacked. The system created much untidiness in the corridors and consumed much fuel but gave little heat; besides, it was a fire hazard. When, in 1875, fire had broken out in Father Madden's room—he was a secular priest making his stay at the Abbey—provisions were made to have the house heated by means of a boiler installed underneath the annex.

Building activity was resumed on a large scale when, from 1879 to 1881, the two sections constituting what was then the new college were erected, namely, the wing reaching from the old seminary westward and there joining with the main college building running from south to north.⁸

In 1868, when the Bishop allowed some of his English-speaking

⁷ St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1065 (Fintan to the Dean, Jan. 14, 1878).

⁸ St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1072 (Fintan to the dean, Mar. 7, 1879); p. 1073 (Fintan to "Herr Doktor," April 28, 1879); p. 1079 (Fintan to the Dean, Jan. 10, 1881).



ST. MEINRAD ABBEY, 1874 TILL THE FIRE, 1887

Drawn in agreement with the ruins and from memory by Father Luke Gruwe, O.S.B.
Southeast view. At North end, the Crypt of the Church that was to be.

students to go to St. Thomas, Kentucky, and later, also to Montreal, Canada, the congestion at St. Meinrad was relieved considerably. During the scholastic year of 1871-1872 St. Meinrad had a total enrollment of fifty students. The following year there were sixty-four students.⁹

In 1874 Bishop Maurice de St. Palais, who had built a diocesan seminary in Indianapolis, put all his students in philosophy and theology in that seminary; all his remaining students he recalled from other minor seminaries and sent them to St. Meinrad, with the instruction that those who spoke only German should learn to speak English and those who spoke only English should learn to speak German. The Diocese was then largely bilingual.

It was at this time that St. Meinrad adopted the Italian pronunciation of Latin "as the only means of avoiding conflict in this regard between the English and the German element." To be consistent, the modern Greek pronunciation was used in Greek.

Since in that year the monks moved into the new buildings, of which "the college" was not yet built, the old frame monastery building was turned into a Minor Seminary; in it were lodged twenty-two students of the Minor Seminary. The thirty-two students of the commercial course occupied the old frame college building. The number of commercial students was purposely restricted.

There were only two students in theology. These students were very probably not from the Vincennes diocese. They lived in the new building.

Father Isidor, Rector of the school as well as of the parish, stayed with the students in the old building. He wrote that after the monks had moved up into the new building the students of the Minor Seminary greatly missed the choir service. And so, he said, they on their own initiative took up the recitation of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. They followed the pattern set by the Fraters in giving the signal for divine service, in serving at Mass, and in acting as Master of Ceremonies at High Mass. The students continued to

⁹ St. M. Ll. X, p. 1504 (Abbot Martin, Report to the L.M.V., Nov. 8, 1871); p. 1507 (the same to the same, Oct. 28, 1872).

use the old church, open also to the parish, which still had no church of its own.¹⁰

After one year, the Bishop found it expedient to close his seminary in Indianapolis. On September 18, 1875, he again sent all his seminarians to St. Meinrad.

St. Meinrad now again had, besides the Commercial Course, both a Minor and a Major Seminary. All the students of the Major Seminary were housed in the new building.

Father Isidor, Rector of the seminary, saw in daily participation in the liturgy in its fullness the most efficacious factor for the spiritual formation of the future priest.¹¹ He likewise stressed a ready loyalty to Rome—and that to him of course meant loyalty to the Church. A third spiritually formative factor for the future secular priest Father Isidor found in the monastic religious life, with which the seminarians were constantly in contact; to his mind, that contact was a preventive against being affected by the secularism in which the diocesan priest would necessarily have to live and work. He was rather critical of the method of education in some seminaries; it was his opinion that many clerical failures were attributable to deficient seminary courses, both intellectually and spiritually. To foreign-born seminarians he used to give this pastoral advice: "You must first of all learn English; you must learn to eat tomatoes; and you must learn to mind your own business. That's American."

The first catalogue (*Catalogue of St. Meinrad's College, Spencer County, Ind. For the Scholastic Year 1876-1877*) was published in 1877. Up to 1897, the Father who had charge of the college was called Prefect; since that year, he, too, is called Rector. In the earlier catalogues, the word "college" designated the whole educational

¹⁰ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Isidor Hobi to Einsiedeln* (Isidor to the Dean, Nov. 21, 1874); Conception Abbey archives (Martin to Frowin, May 2, 1875). Note: Copies of letters from St. M. to Conc., and of other pertinent letters are to be found in St. Meinrad Archabbey archives; some are written by hand, some are typed, and some are photostated or photographed.

¹¹ St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1201 (Isidor to the Dean, March 15, 1876; p. 1202-1203 (Isidor to the "Domdekan" March 25, 1876).

establishment, namely the Commercial Course (three years); the Classical Course (six years); the "*Sectio Philosophica*" (one year); and the "*Sectio Theologica*" (three years). When, in the scholastic year 1881-1882, the classical course was reduced to five years, two years were allotted to the course in philosophy.

The total number of students for 1876-1877 was eighty-three. The amount charged for "board and tuition, bedding, washing and mending of articles washed" was \$90 a semester. In 1878-1879 the number of students was 112; but board and tuition, etc., again were down to \$75.

By 1876 the school at St. Meinrad had earned a good reputation for itself. Abbot Martin, Father Fintan (the Prior), and Father Isidor (the Rector), had a comprehensive education and were good teachers. Some younger men taught under their guidance; however, some of the young teachers, though willing and devoted, had not the opportunity to prepare themselves properly for the teaching profession.

The teaching staff was weakened greatly when in June, 1876, Abbot Martin went on his exploration trip to the Sioux Indians, in the Dakota Territory. From that time on, he was but seldom at St. Meinrad. Moreover, he transferred several Fathers to Dakota, thus placing additional burdens on the few who remained at St. Meinrad; even some Fraters were put to teaching; at times, secular priests, suspended by their Bishops and staying temporarily at St. Meinrad, helped teach. When in May, 1877, Bishop de St. Palais visited St. Meinrad the last time—he died on June 28—he again expressed his benevolent interest in St. Meinrad, an interest which made him regret the Abbot's prolonged absence, for both the Abbey and the school suffered as a result.¹²

In the summer of 1879, shortly before Abbot Martin left permanently for Dakota, he appointed Father Bede Maler, O.S.B., Rector of the Major Seminary.¹³

Father Bede had come from Conception to St. Meinrad. He orig-

¹² St. M. L. XI, p. 1210 (Isidor to the Dean, July 9, 1877).

¹³ Conception Abbey archives (Bede Maler to Prior Frowin, Aug. 10, 1879).

inally was from a European monastery. He had arrived at St. Meinrad on April 26, 1878. His intellectual qualities were outstanding and, excepting moral theology, he was competent to teach almost any philosophical or theological science in the seminary curriculum. He was also a versatile writer.

But the office of Rector soon proved to be beyond him. Right after Christmas, Father Isidor, just back from a visit to Europe, again was appointed Rector, to the joy of the seminarians—an office that he retained to the end of his life.

In 1878, the eight priests who had been ordained on September 22, 1868, were invited to celebrate at St. Meinrad, their Alma Mater, the tenth anniversary of their Ordination. Together with a number of other secular priests, they accepted the invitation with joy, all the more so because the celebration would coincide with the Ember week—Ordination week—of September, and Francis Silas Chatard, the new Bishop of Vincennes, was to make his first visit to St. Meinrad and confer the various Orders. The Jubilee Mass, *coram episcopo*, was unique in that each one of the eight jubilarians, six seculars and two Benedictines, had an official part in it: Celebrant, Deacon, Subdeacon, two Acolytes, Thurifer, and two Assistants at the throne. Father Isidor, their Rector, served as *presbyter assistens* and preached a sermon on "the eight beatitudes of the priest," in which he presented a résumé of pastoral theology.

Fifteen years later, on June 14, 1893, five of these eight jubilarians again assembled at St. Meinrad to celebrate their Silver Jubilee. The five were Fathers Florentin Sondermann, Herman Alerding (Bishop of Fort Wayne, November 30, 1900), Victor Schnell, Michael Heck, and Benno Gerber, O.S.B. (Of the other three members of the class, Henry Kessing had died in 1882; Peter Siebmann in 1891; and Placidus Zarn, O.S.B., had been sent to do pastoral work in Pierre, South Dakota, at the end of April, 1892.) The Jubilee celebration was made a gala affair at St. Meinrad. Father Benno, the Prior, was the celebrant of the Jubilee Mass, at which three of the other Jubilarians assisted, respectively, as Deacon, Subdeacon,

and Master of Ceremonies. Father Meinrad Fleischmann, the senior secular priest alumnus of St. Meinrad, preached.—Over the entrance to the festively decorated dramatic hall, where an elaborate entertainment was given, an ornamental inscription was attached: *Quinque jubilantibus corvis St. Meinradi laete gratulatur Abbatia* (1893). And within the hall these verses greeted the eyes of the Jubilarians:

<i>Avete, celsi hospites,</i>	<i>Et laborastis strenue</i>
<i>In almae Matris gremio,</i>	<i>In Salvatoris vinea,</i>
<i>Quae quondam misit sospites</i>	<i>Qui vobis non exigui</i>
<i>Vos ex sudore et studio.</i>	<i>Donet laboris praemia.</i>



THE JUBILEE CLASS, 1868-1878-1893

From left to right: Michael Heck; Peter Siebmann, †1891; Benno Gerber, O.S.B. Victor Schnell; Florentin Sondermann; Hermann Alerding

In appreciation of the hearty welcome their Alma Mater had given them, the four Jubilarians of the secular clergy donated the large statue of St. Thomas Aquinas, which to the present day graces one of the corridors of the Major Seminary.¹⁴

The Abbey was intent upon sharing its Benedictine heritage, not only with the future priests, but also with the laity in general. On

¹⁴ St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1215 (Isidor to the Dean, Oct. 12, 1878). *St. Benedikts-Panier*, 1893 (*St. Meinrads-Raben*, No2. 3); 1894, (No. 1).

March 21, 1879—the feast of St. Benedict and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of St. Meinrad—Abbot Martin announced to a large and enthusiastic assembly “the introduction of the Third Order[?] of St. Benedict.” Those who would express their intention of joining this “Third Order” were to assemble on the afternoon of one Sunday of each month to receive an appropriate instruction from the pastor, and after a year they were to be received solemnly at the monastery itself.¹⁵

Monastic life had a better opportunity to develop itself, once the transition from a mission house to an Abbey had been made. This development was largely determined by the qualities of the Abbot, both as a man and, especially, as a superior.

A critical appraisal of Abbot Martin is contained in a lengthy report written by Father Caspar Seiler, a cousin of Prior Fintan.

Father Seiler, a secular priest from Switzerland, had arrived at St. Meinrad on December 8, 1875. He then thought of becoming a Benedictine. After he had been at the Abbey for a number of weeks, he was put in charge of the congregation at Huntingburg from April, 1876, to October, 1878.

Since letters from Father Isidor manifested considerable fear about the state of affairs brought about by Abbot Martin's autocratic method and commitments, and since even letters from Prior Fintan manifested some apprehension,¹⁶ the Dean of Einsiedeln requested Father Seiler, well-known at Einsiedeln, to send him the results of his observations at St. Meinrad. Father Seiler did so on August 6, 1877.¹⁷

¹⁵ Conception Abbey archives (Abbot Martin to Prior Frowin, March 27, 1879; cf. St. Vincent Archabbey archives (Abbot Martin to Abbot Wimmer, Feb. 28. March 31, 1879).

¹⁶ St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1207-1209 (Isidor to the Abbot of Einsiedeln, June 14, 1877); pp. 1210-1212 (Isidor to the Dean, July 9, 1877); IX, p. 1056-1057 (Fintan to the Dean of Einsiedeln, Oct. 1876); p. 1058 (the same, June 4, 1877).

¹⁷ L.C. XII, pp. 1298-1304. Father Caspar Seiler intended to become a member of St. Meinrad's Abbey. But when Abbot Martin removed him still farther from his intended goal by taking him from Huntingburg to the Indian

After pointing to the delicacy of the commission entrusted to him, Father Seiler wrote:

Add to this that, in regard to the Lord Abbot and his undertakings, things can be viewed so differently and, hence, can be judged so differently—a situation that makes it exceedingly difficult to say the right thing—it would seem that only the narration of individual facts might perhaps give you more light. I believe that precisely certain, almost inexplicable, traits of character of the Abbot, certain rugged, strangely singular traits and qualities—which to the ordinary human understanding appear as extravagances—joined to the so largely admirable qualities—qualities, by far surpassing the common standard—. . . and that the difference in judgment resulting from considering the Abbot only as a private person with his qualities of mind and heart or, on the other hand, as superior of a Benedictine abbey, that precisely these things, I say, render a judgment very difficult for my mind, which finds itself incompetent in such extraordinary things. . . .

During the first four to six weeks of my stay in St. Meinrad, my impression was that of practically everyone else who comes only into private, personal, friendly intercourse with the Abbot: I stood almost exclusively in wonderment of him, and I felt an almost mischievous joy when I thought to have found some little fault in him by reason of which he, as man, seemed to have some similarity to me, all too much a man. Indeed, the Reverend Abbot Martin makes contact with everyone with such a naturalness and cordiality, so much sets aside all ceremonial dignity, approaches everyone so understandingly, as man to man, that with the simple nicety of his demeanor and judgment he easily wins without exception the esteem and love of all who come into private contact with him, even though it be only for a short time; and that all the more, the more sensitively refined the persons are who come into contact

Mission at Standing Rock (his entries in *Book of Baptisms*, Standing Rock, are from Sept. 6 to Nov. 15, 1878), Father Seiler returned to Indiana, where for years he served the diocese of Indianapolis. He entered St. Meinrad's Abbey on Dec. 15, 1897, and made simple vows on Apr. 2, 1899, receiving the name Augustin; he died on July 3, 1902. He was a man of outstanding ability.

with him. And along with this there appear traits of so simple a humility, of so deep an ascetical, spiritual insight, of such a purity, and of such a nobility of pure intention, and above all, of such a ready will for sacrifice for a cause recognized as good or obligatory—a willingness that does not hesitate for a moment to make personal sacrifices, even those of health, of life, and of the greatest inconveniences—that this esteem and love develop into a really deep veneration of him. If nevertheless you will in the following report find many a thing that seems to be in contradiction to the foregoing, that may well be due to the fact that I myself am not quite clear about the Lord Abbot, except it be on the basis that in his make-up there exists a certain inexplicable contradiction—a dissonance between head and heart, or in head and heart itself, or perhaps . . . that the man Martin Marty presents himself quite differently from the Benedictine Abbot Martin Marty.

The first thing that struck me somewhat was that I saw him ill-humored and in that mood complaining bitterly and disparagingly—but, at most, only the one or the other time—or that he also spoke in a cutting or ironic and sarcastic manner to the older Fathers. I noticed even more that at the examinations in the college he was from the beginning until the end only sour vinegar, that he dealt very coldly with most of the pupils and that even for the best and faultless answers he showed a purely negative recognition, and that he also treated the professors, especially the younger ones, like nonentities—an attitude that must have deprived them of all friendliness and confidence. . . .

With regard to monastic discipline itself, I was at first very powerfully impressed by its strictness and simplicity and so forth. But soon, though at first not without fear of rash judgment, I came to consider some of the regulations above the strength of the average human being, both in the moral and in the physical order; soon I was filled with grave misgiving, seeing that almost all the young Fathers and Fraters educated here were sickly or weakly—a situation in which the bodily weakness seemed to have its counterpart in the lack of mental vigor. But I believe that the riddle easily finds its solution in the fact that young people,

who still are in the process of growth and of bodily development and from morning before four o'clock till twelve at noon are under a very great strain, especially with regard to their vocal organs, get absolutely nothing to eat on the ordinary fast days—a regulation that was enforced for several years, until necessity forced some mitigation—and that, moreover, they received a coarse fare, strengthening but little and insufficient; whereas in this country everybody eats much better than in Europe and, as I believe, must eat so on account of the climatic conditions. . . . Add to this that the Lord Abbot is but too prone to throw actual frailties and sickly conditions, and legitimate needs and requests arising therefrom, into the same pot with effeminacy and unwarrantable seeking after convenience. But it is said that in this regard considerable fluctuation has marked the conduct of the Abbot.

To me, he seemed to mortify and, in a sense, to condemn not only unruly strength but any strength at all: necessary strength, mental strength.

And, it often seemed to me, he dealt the same way in spiritual matters with the faculties of his subjects. In his endeavor to afford opportunity for spiritual mortification and penance he seemed to me to probe unmercifully and with his iron will actually to crush every sort of self-determination, to reduce everyone to an almost mechanical tool for his certainly well-meant ideals—more than to me seemed necessary even for a strict monastery. I may have been too pessimistic in my views when, later, I thought to observe here and there that the younger generation educated at St. Meinrad was also intellectually somewhat drooping and lacking in that sprightliness that well becomes also a young religious. . . .

To my way of thinking, the Abbot suffers from what I believe to be the unfortunate idea that it is his duty to provide for all under his care as much opportunity as possible for penance; whereas I am of the opinion that the monastery, the Rule, the associates, the office, and so forth, of themselves furnish the cross, and that the superior should rather lighten the yoke without infringing upon discipline, order, and the Rule. . . . Yet I am convinced that the Lord

Abbot has done all things only with the best of intentions Once he has judged an undertaking to be good, regardless of all else he sacrifices all things temporal in its behalf. It is, above all, this ready will on his own part to make sacrifices that makes him, as a superior, inconsiderate in the demands he makes upon his subjects. . . .

In his position as superior, Abbot Martin in general seems to me to be altogether too idealistic, all too ardently and with all his soul in pursuit of self-constituted ideals—yet with the best of intentions and with heroic devotedness—instead of having due regard for the state of affairs at hand and utilizing it practically. This is obviously the reason why he has so little regard for things established, for customs, Statutes, Bishops, other monasteries and Abbots, when there is question of pursuing an idea of the excellence of which he is convinced. This disregard manifests itself in conduct, judgment, and so forth. . . . Instead of customs, traditions, Statutes, considerate consultation and planning, there are just his pet ideas, which, however, apparently change according as he seems to recognize something else as better. In such a case, with exceedingly great humility and disregard of self, he does not hesitate to change his plans and his commands. The result of this is unsteady groping and effort, under which no firm customs and monastic usages can form themselves; instead there is continual changing of the daily order, and so forth.

To this there is to be added that with most of his ideas, as, for instance, about the Breviary, the Indians, and the intermingling of the Brothers with the Fraters, the Lord Abbot presented the matter as being—and actually believed it to be—the will of God and thought that he had to act in that manner. . . . In such matters he seems to believe easily in an extraordinary vocation. From this there appears the big difference between his impulsive, bounding sort of activity, and the calm, well counseled, prudent procedure of such men as are usually considered to be good and prudent ecclesiastical superiors, who have due regard for a given situation with all its circumstances. In contrast to ruling by Rule and custom, his is a personal regime, with all the harm nearly always adhering to such a regime . . . or, in

other words, Abbot Martin seems to act rather as a prophet than as one skilled in the law, more as a founder of a religious Order than as an Abbot of an existing Benedictine Abbey. Hence the only question is whether he is a prophet and whether in St. Meinrad he should, may, or can be the founder of a new Order.

So, in part, this appraiser of Abbot Martin as a man and as a superior. Abbot Martin's intellectual accomplishments, his spiritual greatness, and his courage of heart command respect, although some of his natural traits were a source of humiliation to himself—and to others.

For ascetical reasons, Abbot Martin greatly restricted human comforts; but he never made a regulation that he himself did not follow in an exemplary manner.

On fast days there was no breakfast at all; on the other days breakfast consisted of coffee and bread, but without butter; it was with difficulty that Father Isidor obtained the concession of butter for the students. Dinner consisted of soup, meat or, on days of abstinence, some other principal dish, and desert. No cider, nor wine. At supper, meat and one vegetable were served. On fast days supper was simpler, consisting, for instance, of milk-toast and coffee. After some years, however, necessity brought about some additions to the daily fare.

Smoking was banned. "God bless my soul!" Brother Ignatius Dwyer exclaimed fervently when the Abbot found tobacco under the Brother's straw mattress; he knew that if he would not mention the contraband at the next Chapter of Faults, the Abbot would. Later, in the days of Abbot Fintan and subsequent Abbots, permission for moderate smoking could be obtained; yet the permission was not sought by all.

The two Wolter brothers, Maurus and Placidus, who for some time had been active in behalf of the Benedictine Order in Germany and Belgium, were alert to make their interpretation of monasticism spread also to other countries. Prior Frowin Conrad, O.S.B., the founder of Conception Abbey, previous to his coming to America

had prolonged personal acquaintance with Prior Placidus Wolter, of Maredsous. Through Father Frowin the influence of this acquaintance was soon felt also in St. Meinrad.

Abbot Martin, as superior, was much impressed by the Beuron concept of the office of Abbot, inasmuch as he thought that the Order stood in need of reform, a task that he stood ready to undertake.¹⁸ And yet, although some of the suggestions coming from Prior Placidus Wolter found favor with him, he rejected others. For instance Prior Placidus had of his own accord sent Abbot Martin the Maredsous ritual for the profession of both Simple and of Solemn Vows. Abbot Martin found the ritual for the Solemn Profession befitting, but he objected to so much public solemnity for the first Vows. In his opinion, people would be disagreeably affected at seeing some leaving monastic life after taking simple Vows with so much public ceremony.

On the other hand, Abbot Martin liked the Beuron cuculla and scapular with the angularly cut capuche attached. This was officially introduced into St. Meinrad on December 24, 1874; Brother Philip Ketterer, who on that day made his profession of Simple Vows, was the first to receive it, together with the long habit which only the Fathers and Fraters had worn before. The whole community began to wear the Beuron capuche on January 1, 1875. (The Einsiedeln capuche had a less symmetric shape and was detachable from the scapular.) Abbot Martin did not accept the Beuron leather girdle for the Fathers, but retained the cincture of cloth.¹⁹

On the same occasion that the Abbot told the community to move into the new building (September 8, 1874), he ordered also that from that day on the Brothers should wear the habit and scapular throughout the day, even when engaged in work in the fields or in the woods. When this order was given, the habit worn by the Brothers still reached only to the knees; the scapular was a little

¹⁸ Conception Abbey archives (Abbot Martin to Prior Frowin, Feb. 13, 1877).

¹⁹ Conception Abbey archives (Prior Placidus Wolter, O.S.B., to Prior Frowin, Nov. 26, 1874; Martin to Frowin, Dec. 28, 1874; cf. Nov. 17, 1874; May 2, 1875).

shorter. The Brothers soon complained. Brother Bernardin said that the habit was too much of a hindrance in plowing and mowing. Yet the Abbot insisted. When summer arrived, some complained that hard work in the sultry heat was most trying to one wearing the long habit. Further, the habits were made of strong sheeting that had been dyed black. But the color was not fast, and so when the habits were saturated with sweat they lost their color and stained the underclothing and even the skin. Before long the habits were of a nondescript color. Even when very old, Brother Philip remembered the familiar figure of the hard-working procurator, Father Wolfgang, going about in his faded habit.

Upon the complaint of the Brothers, the Abbot himself, wearing the habit to prove that work under such conditions was feasible, went to work in the field with them. Not long thereafter he said that the Brothers, when engaged in field work, might take off their habit; instead of the habit they were to wear a blue tunic that reached to the knees, and a leather belt about it.

The blue tunic looked quite bizarre. After a while, the Brothers simply stopped wearing it and went about their tasks in ordinary work clothes. No one made any objections.

But Father Prior Fintan, the Instructor of the Brothers, told them to wear the regular habit when working in or about the house. Of course, the Fathers as well as the clerics regularly wore the habit both in and about the monastery.²⁰

This concern over the wearing of the religious habit reveals the reverence St. Meinrad had for it. It is true that "the habit does not make the monk," but it does make a difference.

Not long after he had been blessed, Abbot Martin had the main altar in the church removed from its customary place, where it had faced the people. He had it put up just inside the communion railing, with its back to the people and facing the Abbot's throne, which now was erected in the place where the altar had previously stood. But neither the community nor the people liked the arrangement.

²⁰ Data furnished in part by Brothers Philip Ketterer and Blaise Meier, both now deceased.

Before long, the altar again was restored to its former place and the throne was erected on the Gospel side of the sanctuary.

By the beginning of 1874 Abbot Martin was intent "upon reducing the external splendor of the abbatial dignity," so Prior Fintan wrote to Prior Frowin of Conception: he no longer wore a pectoral cross when away from the monastery, and at home only on solemnities; at his Mass he no longer employed any assistants apart from one server, allowed only two candles, and no longer gave the blessing with three signs of the cross; further, he pontificated only three times a year, and on the other "feasts of the Abbot" celebrated merely a Solemn High Mass. In general, he held himself to the regulations of the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* [?] which contains special ordinances for Abbots and other prelates who do not have the episcopal dignity. (It must, however, be noted that Abbot Martin was in error in attributing these regulations to the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*; they are in the decree issued by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on September 27, 1659.)

Though, continued Prior Fintan, in the papal brief by which St. Meinrad was erected an Abbey, all rights and privileges of the Swiss Abbots were granted to the new foundation, Abbot Martin did not use all which those Abbots claimed they had, because he thought the practices rested upon an insecure basis. He gained this conviction from the fact that, when St. Meinrad had inquired of Einsiedeln what rights Rome had granted the Abbots of Switzerland, the Dean of Einsiedeln answered that no one knew, and that, if Rome were asked, many a thing practiced by the Abbots would probably not be approved.²¹

In regard to this last point mentioned by Prior Fintan and accepted by Abbot Martin, one should, on the other hand, not lose sight of the fact that the Swiss and the Swiss-American Congregations enjoy participation in the ample privileges of the ancient congregation of St. Justina or, as it is now known, of the Cassinese. In the light of these privileges the restrictions that Abbot Martin im-

²¹ So Prior Fintan wrote to Prior Frowin on May 1874. Conception Abbey archives.

posed upon himself were, objectively speaking, unnecessary because the decree mentioned above did not abrogate the special privileges. But at any rate, this tendency of Abbot Martin to keep the abbatial office in an atmosphere of humility was in keeping with the principle that he followed in his dealings with the Fathers and Fraters: "The *clerici*," he wrote to Prior Frowin, "need more humiliation than the *laici*."²²

Of greater consequence was another attempt at reform that Abbot Martin made. He had noticed that some who came to be Brothers had the usual education and cultural background, but that there were others who were quite deficient in that regard. This deficiency he laudably undertook to correct. He further came to the conclusion that the Brother should again be raised to the status that in the opinion of Abbot Martin he had had in the days of St. Benedict—the Brother, so the Abbot thought, was the original Benedictine monk and St. Benedict had merely had the one or the other of his monks ordained priest for the community.

But Abbot Martin was mistaken in saying that St. Benedict founded his order as an institute of "Lay Brothers." Lay Brothers were introduced into the order only from the eleventh century on. They were called *fratres conversi*, or "Lay Brothers," because in contradistinction to the cleric or choir monks they did not receive clerical orders. Whereas choir duties and functions proper to clerical orders are the canonical obligations of the choir monks, the Brothers attend to whatever other functions might be assigned to them. Their status as well as that of the choir monks is regulated by canon law.

However, unmindful of all historical development in Benedictine monasticism and of ecclesiastical legislation, Abbot Martin gradually developed and carried out his plan. He joined the Brothers to the Fraters in the whole community life, calling all simply "Brothers"; a Brother who had arrived at the monastery before the senior Frater would precede the latter—if the Frater was not in major orders—in choir (which the Brothers were made to attend), in the

²² Dec. 28, 1874 (Conception Abbey archives).

refectory, at recreation, and so forth. All the time that the Fraters could spare from necessary studies had to be spent at work with the Brothers.

Finally, from autumn of 1872, Abbot Martin established a joint Novitiate for both groups:²³ a student who wanted to become a priest did not know whether after his profession of vows he would be allowed to resume his studies preparatory to the priesthood, or whether he would be told that he was to be a Brother; nor did a young man who wanted to be a Brother know whether he would be told to take up studies for the priesthood. The Abbot determined the matter and notified the Novice shortly before his profession.

The Abbot informed Einsiedeln that lack of separate accommodations and of personnel to take care of both groups separately made the joining of both, even of the novitiates, necessary. He added that he wanted to teach the clerics that work is not degrading but honorable, besides being a necessity for St. Meinrad, where additional income had to be provided to support monastery and school.²⁴ But more basic than these utilitarian reasons were his views of monastic life.

Prior Fintan, who was also the Instructor of the Brothers and Fraters and of the Novices, had the following to say about the origin and the development of this arrangement; he was replying on January 13, 1878, to the cautious inquiry (December 18, 1877) of Abbot Basil of Einsiedeln.

When there was question of introducing this arrangement, we wanted to meet the situation created through the general lack of culture and refinement in some of the Brothers. Order and discipline had suffered; people got the wrong idea of the Brothers, and men of better cultural standing were deterred from entering. Consulting, therefore, among ourselves how the Brothers might receive a better education, the thought suggested itself of drawing them

²³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Isidor to Abbot Basil of Einsiedeln, June 18, 1877).

²⁴ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 1009 (Abbot Martin to the Dean of Einsiedeln, March 31, 1876).

closer to the Fraters and Fathers. And so we resolved to make the state of the Brothers somewhat more attractive and worthy of respect so that we might thus be able to exert more influence upon their formation and education. At that time, too, an effort was being made to introduce congregational chant everywhere and to lead people on to a more active participation in the divine service, to sing along, to learn the Vesper psalms and the Gregorian chants of the Mass. . . . And we said to ourselves: If among the people there are some who can learn that, why should not monastic Brothers help along? . . . Should not the Benedictine Order, devoted in a special way to the promotion of liturgical worship, be in the forefront in the reform of the liturgical chant? Therefore our Abbot ordained that our Brothers should recite even Matins with the Choir Monks. This latter practice he dropped after a few years. In amalgamating the Brothers with the choir the Abbot went further than we Fathers had wished; we had only meant that the Brothers should participate with us when, according to the former daily order, they were in choir anyway, instead of saying their private prayers, Litanies, and so forth; but we let it pass, making our comments. Then the force of logical consequence carried further, and it came about, step by step, that Fraters and Brothers were welded together into one class.²⁵

Some of the Fathers, especially Father Isidor, became alarmed at the degree to which the Abbot eventually developed the arrangement; they pointed to the monastic custom and appropriateness of separation between clerics and Brothers and they told the Abbot that the blending of the Novitiates was in conflict with Canon Law and that it would render the profession of vows invalid. Father Isidor, who kept a little notebook into which he used to copy various decrees for his convenient reference, said to the Abbot: "Father Abbot, that's not right; that's against decree so and so. I have a copy of this decree in my booklet—*in meinem Büchle*." "Let me see the booklet," demanded the Abbot. Father Isidor opened the notebook and, putting his bony index finger on the beginning of the

²⁵ St. M. Ll. IX, pp. 1061-1064 (Fintan to Abbot Basil, Jan. 13, 1878).

decree, handed it to the Abbot. "Here!" The Abbot took the booklet closed it, put it into his pocket and said calmly: "Well, now I am the booklet." And things remained as they were.²⁶

Bishop de St. Palais, in the course of his last visit to St. Meinrad—he conferred Tonsure and the various Orders on May 26, 27, 28, and 29, 1877—remarked that if Rome were informed of the situation it would certainly take action.

Since nothing was done and the situation was aggravated by Abbot Martin's prolonged stay in Dakota, from July, 1876, to August, 1877, Father Isidor, as Senior Father at St. Meinrad, wrote to engage the help of Abbot Basil Oberholzer, of Einsiedeln, who had succeeded Abbot Henry. He went so far as to suggest that Abbot Basil procure from Rome orders for a special Visitation. But when Abbot Martin, back from Dakota, said that he would rectify matters, Father Isidor withdrew his suggestion.²⁷

Since, in making his choice of whom he wanted ordained, the Abbot followed his own judgment, he had some ordained who, humble as they may have been, had very poor talents. Others who had perhaps good talents and wanted to become priests often were not chosen. As a consequence, some good students would not take the risk of being barred from the priesthood by entering the Novitiate.

Then, too, Abbot Martin's truly noble intention of elevating the state of the Brothers, though it bore some good fruits, became also by reason of the leveling process that he chose as one of the means, a heady wine for some; Father Isidor speaks of "incredible pride and

²⁶ The incident was told the author by Father Basil Odermatt, O.S.B., of Conception Abbey, who in 1941 well remembered Father Isidor's words. Though Fr. Basil was not sure when this incident took place, it fits best into the situation mentioned; he only remembered that it was in connection with some innovation to which Fr. Isidor objected; but Fr. Isidor did not object to the change of breviaries.

²⁷ St. M. Ll. XI, pp. 1207-1209 (Isidor to Abbot Basil, June 14, 1877); St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Isidor to Abbot Basil, June 14, 1877); St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1206 (Isidor to Abbot Basil, shortly after August 14, 1877).

arrogance." Some such unlooked for by-products of the system also showed up later, especially in the missions.

In addition, as Father Prior Fintan pointed out, all the Brothers had to attend every liturgical function. All of them had to try to learn Latin. If they had learned at least to pronounce Latin, they had to be present in choir always. Those who could not even read it did not have to attend Matins and Lauds, though at first this had been required all the same. The result was that the recitation was unsatisfactory. Moreover, thus occupied so much with choir services, the Brothers could not do justice to the manual work, and consequently Fraters and Fathers had to help generously in having it done. This latter necessity, in turn, made it very difficult for the Fraters and Fathers to devote themselves thoroughly to their studies. As a further consequence, more lay help had to be employed which was of course an economic drawback.

In his report (January 13, 1878) to Abbot Basil, previously mentioned, Father Fintan gave an account of community life at St. Meinrad under this arrangement. A lengthy quotation from it is justified:

We have made Choir Brothers out of our Lay Brothers. Brothers and Fraters are intermingled in choir, at table, in the same study hall and dormitory; they form but one family. They also work together in the fields during vacation when the Fraters do not have to study, and on free days during the school year. The distinction between the two classes is preserved only in so far as those Brothers who have not studied and do not understand Latin do not intone in choir, are not hebdomadarians, and do not read lessons; they merely pray along, and then only at the Little Hours. During Matins, in the morning, they go to work in the house and in the barn, or prepare vegetables in the kitchen, at which they have reading and prayer. Toward the end of Lauds they come to the choir to pray Prime with us, which immediately follows Lauds. After that there is the daily Chapter of Faults, except on Sundays and holy days of obligation and on feasts of the first or second class. The working Brothers then attend the early Mass, at which

they receive Holy Communion on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Breakfast follows, and the Brothers then work until a quarter after eleven. The bell signals them home for None at eleven forty-five. Next comes the particular examen. The student Brothers (the *Fraters*), on the other hand, have spiritual reading and study after the Chapter of Faults until eight o'clock, when Tierce is sung, followed by High Mass and Sext. The Brothers at work must pray these Little Hours privately. At one o'clock in the afternoon the working Brothers go to work. After they have all had recreation together in conversation or a game of dominoes, the student Brothers return to their studies at half past one. At half past five, they attend Vespers. Supper is at five forty-five. At table we have reading of Holy Scripture, in Latin at dinner only; in English at supper. After supper there is recreation until six forty-five, except on Fridays and on Vigils before an Abbot's feast. At six forty-five the Fathers, *Fraters*, and Brothers have Rosary in common, followed by a half-hour meditation, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and Complin. . . . Those Brothers who just cannot read Latin may say other prayers, but they must attend choir in their place. On Sundays and Holy Days we have Prime at seven o'clock followed by a sermon in the Chapter Room. The Father Hebdomadarian preaches; on feast days, the Superior. After the sermon we have the High Mass, at which all the *Fraters* and Brothers receive Holy Communion. At half past one in the afternoon there is catechism, which the Fathers, *Fraters*, Brothers, Novices and Candidates attend; all *Fraters* and Brothers are quizzed in catechism. At this catechetical instruction disciplinary points are also touched upon, reprimands are given, regulations and ordinances made known. After that there is recreation until four o'clock. . . . Only those who are in Major Orders attend Consultive Chapter Meetings. So long as the *Fratres clerici* have not made their Solemn Profession, they stand in the ranks of the Brothers in the Chapter of Faults; those with Solemn Vows have a seat in the Chapter and say their *culpa* in Latin; of the others, the Germans say it in German, the Americans, in English. As a consequence of this union of the *Fratres clerici* and *laici*,

the Novices—Brother- and Frater-Novices—are also joined. We have them in a special place, and there is separation between Brothers and Novices. They have instruction in common; the Breviary is explained to all, and even those who do not know Latin are given some understanding of it. And so the whole morning is spent partly in instruction, partly in reading and studying. Older men who can no longer assimilate anything are sent to work. At profession those who are to be clerics make their profession in Latin, the others in their mother tongue. . . . During the afternoon the Novices must do manual work. Some find this rather hard. . . . Now, your Lordship might well ask: "How does all this work out?" I must say quite well, despite these differences. [Prior Fintan also makes some remarks about the various nationalities, ages, and professions of the Novices and Brothers, which reminds him of the various birds and animals in Noe's ark.] But whether it is the Fraters or the Brothers that gain more by this fusion, I cannot say.

Prior Fintan praised the Fraters for the spirit in which they took to this arrangement and for their willingness to engage in manual work.

After six years of disillusioning experience with the novel arrangement, the Brothers no longer attended Matins and Lauds and they attended the Conventual Mass only on Sundays and Holy Days.²⁸

On December 30, 1878, Prior Fintan informed Abbot Basil: "Recently [it was on, or a few days after, December 8] the Brothers were separated from the *Fratres clerici*."²⁹ Thereupon the Brothers, though participating closely in the rest of the community life, resumed the easier and to them more intelligible recitation of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. They also enjoyed their separate recreation more.³⁰ But the ill effects of Abbot Martin's experiment lasted for years.

There was another monastic innovation that brought Abbot

²⁸ St. M. Ll. IX, pp. 1066-1068 (Fintan to Abbot Basil, May 31, 1878).

²⁹ St. M. Ll. IX, pp. 1071-1072.

³⁰ Statement made to the author by Brother Philip Ketterer, O.S.B.

Martin even greater grief. By the end of 1869, he was entertaining the thought of adopting not only the Roman chant but also the Roman Ceremonial and, above all, the Roman Breviary. During his trip to Europe he talked the matter over with Abbot Guéranger of Solesmes and with Father Ildephons, the Dean of the monastery of Einsiedeln. He advanced mainly these reasons for his preference of the Roman Breviary: First, as a composition it was better than the Benedictine Monastic Breviary—overloaded with feasts as the Monastic Breviary had come to be in the course of centuries; secondly, the joining in the monastic recitation of the Divine Office on the part of the diocesan seminarians, whom one could not expect to accustom themselves temporarily to the Monastic Breviary, would be an efficacious factor in developing men of ecclesiastical prayer; then, too, secular priests—of whom there were in those days nearly always several at St. Meinrad, sent there by their Bishops for disciplinary reasons—would be greatly benefited by reciting the Divine Office with the monks in choir.

But after his return from Rome Abbot Martin told Father Ildephons that he had completely set the idea aside, and, writing from St. Meinrad on September 29, 1873, he requested him to procure and send, at the next opportunity, a dozen new Benedictine Breviaries.

Yet, after all this, he informed Father Ildephons on February 16, 1874, that he himself had now ordered Breviaries, Roman ones at that, because St. Meinrad had decided to give up "the particularistic position" that the religious Orders were occupying. In reply, Father Ildephons pointed out that such a step would be in violation of the declaration of the Congregation of Sacred Rites, dated January 24, 1616. Abbot Martin replied by contending that that declaration forbade only individual monks, but not a whole Chapter, to change from the one Breviary to the other; moreover, he held that the use of the special Breviary was a privilege, which, as such, could be declined by the Order or by a monastery.³¹

³¹ St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1562 (Father Ildephons' résumé of these communications); St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Rt. Rev. Martin Marty to Einsiedeln* (Martin to the Dean, Feb. 16, 1874; the same, Apr. 19, 1874).

Since during the last three days of Holy Week the Benedictines had to use the Roman Breviary anyhow, Abbot Martin, without as much as having consulted Rome, ordered his community simply to continue to recite the Divine Office from the Roman Breviary, beginning with Easter Sunday, April 5, 1874. So sure was he of the finality of the step taken that whatever worth-while Monastic Breviaries there were at St. Meinrad he sent to Conception Priory, which had decided to retain the Benedictine Breviary.³²

Prior Fintan and Father Wolfgang in Chapter spoke against the change, and Father Eberhard at Ferdinand continued to use the Monastic Breviary. But some of the Fathers at St. Meinrad were satisfied with the change; Father Isidor, in particular, expected from it much help in the spiritual formation of the seminarians; and anyone else residing at the Abbey and not favoring the change had no choice. Abbot Martin's sentiments and line of reasoning in regard to the adoption of the Roman Breviary and other Roman liturgical books appear from his letter to Prior Frowin on April 24, 1874:

In regard to the Breviary and Missal, I am daily more convinced that the adoption of the Roman is to our great advantage, and, since you cannot yet follow our example completely, you would certainly do well to introduce in the meanwhile the Roman Ceremonial, Gradual, and Antiphonary or Vespéral . . . The *Ceremoniale Monasticum* is mere sham; there is not one monastery like the other and not one which was not deserted at the time of [the] Revolution; on their return the monks kept or dropped what they pleased of the old rules; each Abbot in turn changed something, and our successors, if we adopt anything arbitrary, will have the right to change it; but if we adopt the Roman Ceremonial simply and strictly, then the subsequent change is an act of disobedience and lawlessness, which will not so easily be attempted by our successors.

Beuron has drawn the pattern for its monastic rites from Solesmes, which is a new institution; Dom Guéranger has kept of the old Benedictine regulations what coincided with his tastes and views. But with all respect for his au-

³² Conception Abbey archives (Martin to Frowin, Apr. 24, 1876).

thority, I would simply ask this one question: If St. Benedict were living and writing his Rule today, would he prescribe a Breviary and Ritual different from the Roman?—No, certainly, and he would not be allowed to do so. Who, then, is more faithful to his spirit, the *fili obedientiae* or the *spiritus singularitatis*? It is the same thing with the *caputium*. This they say, disappeared with the true spirit. But, if a man comes to be forty or fifty years old and his hair turns gray or falls out, would it be the proper thing, then, to dye his hair or to make him wear a wig in order to restore his youthful vigor?

Abbot Martin must have felt that Einsiedeln would consider him inconsistent, because upon his return from Rome, in 1870, he had told Father Ildephons that he had completely set aside the idea of adopting the Roman Breviary, as was mentioned above. In a letter of September 8, 1874, to Abbot Henry, he gave this reason for his change of mind:

The Roman Breviary is a gain for us and for the whole Order of St. Benedict—a gain which cannot be purchased at too high a price. I, at least, am heartily ready to do and to suffer all things rather than forego it. When I was visiting you, the thing was not yet so clear to me as it has since become through all that I have seen and heard.³³

To meet the objection that permission from Rome would have been necessary to legalize his step, he wrote:

We have made no request in Rome because that is made superfluous by the wording of the Bull of Pius V, printed at the beginning of each Breviary; and also for another reason: three years ago your Grace petitioned the Congregation of Sacred Rites about this matter [of the Divine Office].

(At that time, Abbot Henry had procured for St. Meinrad permission to use the *Calendarium* of Einsiedeln; that, of course, implied the use of the Monastic Breviary.) To ask Rome now for permission to introduce the Roman Breviary

³³ St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1511. It seems that the copist through an oversight wrote "Sept. 2" instead of "Sept. 8."—"Heute sind wir in unsern neuen Bau eingezogen." That took place on Sept. 8.

could create the impression that our [present] resolve is in contradiction to the permission granted [to use the *Calendarium* of Einsiedeln], though in reality it is not.³⁴

Considered in themselves, the purposes Abbot Martin had in mind in connection with this daring change were noble and far-reaching, as is made evident in his letter of April 19, 1874, to Father Benno, Rector of the school at Einsiedeln:

To all appearance, all things in Europe must first completely be made *tabula rasa* before the still really good elements can rid themselves of old customs and prejudices and can turn into the way of salvation pointed out in the last session of the Vatican Council. More than any other Order the Benedictines have for centuries followed a particularistic line of life and have therewith wholly or partially cut themselves off from the only living fountain of ecclesiastico-social influence. The French Benedictines ended as Jansenists, the Italian, as Italianissimi, the German were—and to a great part still are—Josephinists, and we in Switzerland have also not been ultra-montane. In a century of newspapers, telegraphs, and railroads one can nowhere any longer shut himself off particularistically. The demand of the present is to join oneself perfectly to the integral ecclesiastical life, to give up all decentralizing ideas and special interests. So long as the Benedictines identified themselves with Rome, they fulfilled their mission; and if we are to achieve our destiny, we must again become fully one with the divine and—in the Holy Spirit—alone infallible center. Only Dupanloup and Döllinger can expect that this center should gravitate toward us and accommodate itself to us.

Moreover, the Benedictines are not cosmopolitans; by reason of their stability their task is of a local nature. Hence to be segregated from the diocesan life and clergy would be tantamount to bringing about antagonism instead of community of life. To my way of thinking there ought rather to be a Benedictine monastery in each Diocese, especially here in America, where there are no other Collegiate

³⁴ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Rt. Rev. Martin Marty, O.S.B., to Einsiedeln* (to Abbot Henry, Sept. 10, 1874).

or Cathedral Chapters. These monasteries should be centers of prayer and fountainheads of supernatural spiritual life. The secular clergy ought to receive its education from the Benedictines; with them, during its active years, the clergy should find recreation, renewal, counsel and help both for itself and, through missions, for its parishes; and into the monastery, the home of its youth, the clergy should be able to retire in old age or sickness. . . . Ought we not to make ourselves fit and prepare ourselves for such a work of destiny?

The introduction of the Roman Breviary has been the result of such reflections. . . .³⁵

Einsiedeln had thus far kept the news of the substitution of the Roman Breviary at St. Meinrad to itself; it was still trying to induce Abbot Martin to return to the use of the Monastic Breviary. Abbot Henry, deeply pained by the affair, on his deathbed commissioned his Dean, Father Ildephons, to work to that end.³⁶

But Abbot Martin had, on April 24, 1874, written the news of the change of Breviaries to Prior Frowin, of Conception, who in turn, on June 3, imparted it to his friend, Dom Placidus Wolter, Master of Novices at Beuron; from there it was published as an alarming step. On July 30 Abbot Maurus Wolter, of Beuron, sent "a circular letter to about twenty Benedictine Abbots and monasteries in Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy, Austria, and England"; in it he took sharp issue with Abbot Martin's action. He granted that the Monastic Breviary, overburdened as it was at that time with special offices of Saints, showed defects, and he said it should be improved in its arrangement; "but," he added, "from bold attempts and accomplished facts in the sense of traditionless Ameri-

³⁵ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Rt. Rev. Martin Marty, O.S.B., to Einsiedeln*.

³⁶ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Abbot Henricus Schmid* (the Abbot to the Dean. No dates are affixed). Abbot Henry died on December 28, 1874. His successor was Basil Oberholzer, O.S.B. When, at the approach of the election of a new Abbot, Father Basil felt that the attention of the Chapter members was directed toward him, he volunteered to go to St. Meinrad—an offer that Einsiedeln did not accept.

canism, may God deliver us!" The special Breviary, he observed, was a privilege that Rome granted to the whole Order and which an individual monastery might not give up without the consent of the Order. He pointed out that the Benedictine Breviary is in reality not a "particular" Breviary; it can rather be styled the Roman Breviary for the monks, inasmuch as Rome has commanded the Benedictines to use this special Breviary. He called upon the Order to force Abbot Martin either to return to the use of the Benedictine Breviary or to expect something else. This last phrase was a thinly veiled threat of exclusion from the Order. The circular urged such an action on the part of the Order even though, so Abbot Maurus thought, the Holy See had permitted Abbot Martin to take the step he had; Rome, he said, should be petitioned to rescind such a grant. —Father Chrysostom, who at that time was visiting with his brother, the Abbot of Gries, later wrote to Prior Frowin of Conception and called the circular "incendiary letters"; he blamed Abbot Maurus for much of the bitterness in the controversy.³⁷

Abbot Martin knew of this circular only from a modified version of it that Dom Placidus Wolter of Beuron had written to Prior Frowin of Conception. (Mindful of the decadent monarchism to which many of the European monasteries harked back, though they were oppressed by it, one can hardly refrain from smiling when reading in this and other letters of Dom Placidus about "the American choir," "Americanism" "of the dreadful democracy and mania for wiping out all class distinctions"—he had in mind the Breviary and the Lay Brothers of St. Meinrad.) Abbot Martin answered Prior Frowin that the letter from Beuron contained no argument that St. Meinrad had not thought of and thrown into the balance when making its decision.³⁸

Having heard of the agitation in Europe, Abbot Martin wrote to Abbot Boniface Wimmer:

³⁷ Conception Abbey archives (Martin to Frowin, April 24, 1874; cf. Fintan to Frowin, Jan. 8, 1874; copy of Abbot Wolter's lengthy circular in St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1562-1564; Chrysostom to Frowin, Jan. 27, 1876; March 13, 1876).

³⁸ Conception Abbey archives (Abbot Martin to Prior Frowin, Aug. 5, 1874).

By this time, your Grace has probably heard that since Easter we have been using the Roman Breviary. I was of the opinion that no one would worry about what we in this corner of Indiana were praying and singing. But now a circular about the matter has gone forth from Beuron and has been sent everywhere except to me."³⁹

Meanwhile the opposition was not idle in Rome itself. The monastery of St. Paul, whose Abbot, Pescetelli, the Benedictine Procurator General *in Curia*, was firmly against Abbot Martin's innovation. The Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Rites assured an inquirer that Abbot Martin had not handed in a petition in the affair. Cardinal Pitra, O.S.B., a monk of Solesmes, did not think that the Propaganda had been petitioned; he was quoted as characterizing Abbot Martin's move as "a piece of unbelievable boldness."⁴⁰

Some at Einsiedeln were of the opinion that if Abbot Martin had first petitioned the Holy See his petition would have been granted. Father Ildephons, the Dean of Einsiedeln, later assured Abbot Martin that in such an event Abbot Henry, though regretting the change of Breviaries, would not have heeded the request of Abbot Wolter to petition the Holy See to recall the grant.⁴¹ Even the Dean supposed it likely that Abbot Martin had handed in such a petition, in which case there might be unwelcome repercussions from Rome if Einsiedeln would now take steps in the same matter. Learning from Abbot Martin's letter of September 10 that St. Meinrad had

³⁹ St. Vincent Archabbey archives (Dec. 4, 1874).—In the St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1562, there is the copy of a note by P. Ildephons that under date of July 30 [1874], a "copy" of that circular had been sent to Abbot Martin. Either this copy did not reach Abbot Martin or he merely wants to point out that Maurus Wolter did not directly send him such a circular. The solution seems to be contained in a letter of Fr. Ildephons to Abbot Martin (March, 1875), in which the writer says that he has it by hearsay that the "manifesto" was a copy of a letter written to Fr. Fidelis Maute, O.S.B., at Jasper. Fr. Fidelis was born near Beuron and had studied for a time at Einsiedeln. See St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1513 (Abbot Wolter to Abbot Henry, July 15, 1874).

⁴⁰ Conception Abbey archives (Prior Placidus Wolter to Prior Frowin, Sept. 11, 1874).

⁴¹ St. M. Ll. XI, pp. 1201-1202 (Isidor to the Dean, March 15, 1876); St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, (Fr. Ildephons to Abbot Martin, [March ?, 1875]).

not at all considered it necessary to obtain a special indult from the Holy See and that therefore it would continue in the course determined upon, Abbot Henry instructed Father Ildephons to write that, if St. Meinrad had entered upon that course arbitrarily, hence illegally, it should at once retrace its steps; Einsiedeln would even supply the new Breviaries needed.⁴² To this last appeal Abbot Martin replied on December 17, 1874, writing to the Dean: "The only mistake that we can see after all this consists in our having omitted to obtain beforehand from the Holy See the express permission for our step. This mistake we now intend to make good."⁴³ Abbot Martin acted without delay. In his own name and in that of the Community he sent a petition to the Propaganda for an indult to retain the Roman Breviary.

Meanwhile, Abbot Henry having died, Basil Oberholzer succeeded him as Abbot of Einsiedeln, on January 13, 1875. Cardinal Franchi, the Prefect of the Propaganda, now wrote to Abbot Basil, under date of April 8, 1875, that since St. Meinrad was joined to and affiliated with the Swiss-Benedictine Congregation, Abbot Basil should send exact information as to what the Rule of St. Benedict and the Constitutions of the Swiss-Benedictine Congregation, which had been extended to the Swiss-American Congregation, prescribed in the case under consideration. Further, the Abbot should express his own opinion and recommendation in the affair.⁴⁴

In his reply of May 12, 1875, Abbot Basil pointed to the chapters of the Rule of St. Benedict which regulate and prescribe the special Divine Office; to the various Papal Decrees enjoining that office on all Benedictines; but especially to the brief of Pope Clement XII, issued on November 10, 1737, to Abbot Nicolaus of Einsiedeln, in which the Pope approved the Breviary submitted and ordered it to be used by the whole Congregation. Abbot Basil recommended

⁴² St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1565-1566 (the Dean to Abbot Martin, [Oct.] 20, [1874]).

⁴³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Rt. Rev. Martin Marty to Einsiedeln*.

⁴⁴ St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1569.

that Abbot Martin be ordered to resume the Benedictine Monastic Breviary

because, first, he had made the change without permission; secondly, because there was hope that the Swiss-American Congregation would have considerable increase if the unity of the Divine Office were restored; thirdly, because, if this impediment, arising from the introduction of a different Divine Office, were no longer in the way, the aforesaid Abbot Martin, otherwise possessed of the highest fervor and keeping the best discipline in his monastery, would certainly contribute much to the edification of other monasteries.⁴⁵

The Propaganda, noting from the account of Abbot Basil that the Dean of Einsiedeln had in this affair already handed a petition to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, put all its own data into the hands of that Congregation. The Congregation examined all the documents concerned and notified the Propaganda that "the substitution of the Roman Breviary for the Monastic effected in the monastery of St. Meinrad by the Right Reverend Father Abbot Martin is to be wholly rejected, and it is in conflict with conditions 3 and 4 of the Decree of Foundation of the aforesaid Abbey; and, therefore, the same Abbot Martin is to be ordered to restore at once the use of the Monastic Breviary." This decree, issued by the Secretariat of the Congregation on August 23, 1875,⁴⁶ was remitted to the Propaganda, which in turn, on November 6, sent it to Father Ildephons at Einsiedeln.⁴⁷

Father Ildephons now had the embarrassing duty of forwarding the decree to Abbot Martin; this he did on February 17, 1876.⁴⁸ Later, Abbot Basil donated to St. Meinrad a sufficient number of large and small new Monastic Breviaries.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1566-1568.

⁴⁶ St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1568.

⁴⁷ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (private copy).

⁴⁸ St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1569-1570.

⁴⁹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Abbot Basil to Abbot Martin, April 23, 1876).

Abbot Martin received the Decree on March 9 and published it in the Chapter of Faults on the very next morning: "What Rome wills is God's will and therefore also our will," he said. At dinner, the Decree was read to the whole community. "All the seminarians," wrote Father Isidor, "and all the secular priests staying with us, as well as all the Fathers and Fraters, admired the Abbot for his resignation, word, and manner of acting; the seminarians who had attended the monastic choir with the six secular priests knew well what had been intended with that arrangement."⁵⁰

Father Chrysostom, who on December 7 of the previous year had returned from Einsiedeln to St. Meinrad, wrote to the Abbot of Einsiedeln on March 11:

Your letter, together with the two Rescripts of the S.C.R. and the S.C. *de propag. fide* arrived here during the afternoon of Thursday, the ninth of this month. On account of Lent, Vespers for the following day had already been prayed; therefore the Office for the following day could not be changed. But already in the evening, after supper, Father Abbot joined us in the recreation room and, calm and composed, communicated the news to us. I must sincerely confess that at that moment I was edified at the demeanor of the Abbot. He declared to us quite calmly that he was glad that the affair had now been decided: "Even though," (he said), "so far as the liturgy and the seminary are concerned, one seems to have lost something by the decision, one has, on the other hand, also gained something inasmuch as by this same decision the belonging to the Benedictine Order has in a better manner been restored and more firmly established." Thereupon the Abbot made known the resolve to re-introduce the Monastic Breviary at once, "*statim*," as ordered by the Decree.

The fact that Abbot Martin had been given a setback in the affair of the Breviaries, as also in other phases of monastic discipline, did not alter his conviction about the advantages of his endeavor to lead St. Meinrad and eventually the Benedictine Order

⁵⁰ St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1201 (Isidor to the Dean, March 15, 1876); VIII, p. 1007 (Abbot Martin to the Dean, March 10, 1876).

into a more intensive participation, as he thought, in the liturgy and in the external work of the Church; with regard to the latter, he was of the opinion that in Europe the Order had to a great extent settled down into a state of reposeful inactivity largely forced upon it by external circumstances—and that its original, inherent energies should be reactivated. He wrote to Abbot Frowin:

The momentary failure of our efforts at regeneration of the Benedictine religious life is surely in fulfillment of the divine intentions, which will bring about that what we have accomplished in a limited circle and that what we have sacrificed for the sake of charity will in time be made the common good of the whole family. It was not to be expected that the conservative element would surrender to the reform at the first attempt. If separation had followed upon resistance, then the gap would not have been bridged over; but as it is, there always is hope that with time the whole mass will be permeated and assimilated by the leaven.⁵¹

It would be an injustice to the first Abbot of St. Meinrad's Abbey to judge him merely from the mistakes into which his zeal for the Church and for the Order had led him. They were mistakes of a man who with scant means also accomplished much good. From personal dealings with him, clear-eyed and simple souls experienced a feeling of respect and affectionate regard for him. In 1874, Frater Ildephons Zarn, who was sickly at that time, wrote of Abbot Martin to the Dean of Einsiedeln: "God has given us a good superior, who can heal not only sick souls but also sick bodies. The Rt. Rev. Abbot is both the physician of the monastery and of the poor in the neighborhood. . . . The Rt. Rev. Abbot always goes to choir with us. He frequently goes on missions, but he is at home most of the time."

Sister Verena, O.S.B., who entered the convent at Ferdinand in 1883, narrated how as a little girl she and other children used to bring flowers to the monastery and always asked to see Abbot Martin; he always received them very kindly, gave them little holy pictures and his blessing. In her old age, she still wonders that they were so bold

⁵¹ Conception Abbey archives (Martin to Frowin, Feb. 13, 1877).

as always to ask for the Abbot. "But, then, he was so kind to us and left us happy."⁵³

And no less a man than Bishop O'Connor of Omaha, who had learned to know Abbot Martin, said of him: "He is a man of rare merit."⁵⁴

Shortly after the events narrated in this chapter, the saintly Prior Fintan wrote: "When I look back upon our history, I cannot fail to recognize how God always has helped us and how, regardless of many a step in the wrong direction, of many a mistake and of lack of experience, things have gone ahead. In view of all this we must say, it is not men but it is God that built St. Meinrad; to Him alone the honor."⁵⁵

⁵² St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Ildephons Zarn, O.S.B.*, (Fr. Ildephons Zarn to the Dean, Jan. 1, 1874).

⁵³ As told to the author in an interview with Sister Verena.

⁵⁴ St. Vincent Archabbey archives (O'Connor to Boniface Wimmer, Dec. 30, 1877).

⁵⁵ St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1056 (Prior Fintan to Dean Ildephons, Oct. 16, 1876).

CHAPTER IX

THE BEGINNING OF INDIAN MISSION WORK BY ST. MEINRAD'S ABBEY. ABBOT MARTIN, TITULAR BISHOP OF TIBERIAS AND VICAR APOSTOLIC OF THE DAKOTA TERRITORY; HIS RESIGNATION AS ABBOT¹

HISTORY POINTS an accusing finger at the Anglo-Saxon race for its treatment of the North American Indian. Instead of Christianizing and civilizing the Indian, Anglo-Saxons have either simply killed him or driven him from a desirable piece of land onto one not wanted by the white man at least for the present. Ousting the Indian has at times been given the appearance of justice through the formality of a treaty in which the Indian, unaware of the values concerned, has been made to barter away his territory for a few blankets

¹It is strange that the mission work which the Benedictines have now for 77 years been doing among the Souix seems, in general, to be unknown to writers on Church history. Thus Theodore Maynard in his sizable volume, *The Story of American Catholicism*, 1941, p. 412, relying on G. J. Garraghan, S.J., *The Jesuits of the Middle United States*, 1938, III, p. 512, writes: "Though they [the Indian missions] were abandoned in 1852 in favor of working among the whites who were flooding the West, they were started again in 1886." Garraghan had written only of the Jesuit missions; but Maynard, writing of Church history in the United States in general, could well have mentioned that, in 1876, the Benedictines of St. Meinrad's Abbey took over the missions among the Sioux, that nobody wanted, and that it was the veteran apostle of the Sioux, Martin Marty, who in 1886 induced the Jesuits from Buffalo, N.Y., exiles from Germany, to take over the two missions at Pine Ridge and Rosebud. De Smet, by the way, acquainted some of the Sioux Indians of the Dakota Territory with the faith only incidentally, mainly in his travels between St. Louis and the Jesuit missions in Montana; he did no organized mission work among them.

and trinkets, with a bottle of "firewater" generously thrown into the bargain. It is no wonder that the Indian gradually became distrustful and vindictive, occasionally making a bloody, though hopeless effort to right the wrong done him.

Congress finally awakened to a sense of duty, at least in principle. By a Public Act approved on April 10, 1869, it appropriated \$2,000,000 to enable the President to maintain peace with and among the various Indian tribes and to promote civilization among them.² Congress likewise authorized the President to organize a Board of Commissioners who were to be chosen by the President himself. This Board was to work conjointly with the Secretary of the Interior.³

Another Act of Congress, approved on July 15, 1870, made it unlawful for any officer on the Active List of the Army to hold a Civil Office.⁴ Members of the military were thus debarred from acting as Indian Agents.

In compliance with that act, President Ulysses S. Grant in his second annual message to the Senate and House of Representatives (Dec. 5, 1870), pointed to the successes the Government had previously attained through "the experiment" of making the management of Indian affairs "a missionary work" by entrusting a few agencies "to the denomination of Friends"—the Quakers. He then outlined his plans for solving the Indian problem in the future:

I determined to give all the agencies to such religious denominations as had heretofore established missionaries among the Indians, and perhaps to other demoniations who would undertake the work on the same terms—i.e., as missionary work. The societies selected are allowed to name their own agents, subject to the approval of the Executive, and are expected to watch over them and aid them as missionaries, to Christianize and civilize the Indian and to train him to the arts of peace. I entertain the confident hope

² *Acts and Resolutions of Congress, Passed at the Third Session of the Fortieth Congress. December 7, 1868-March 4, 1869* (Washington Printing Office, 1869), *Public-No. 12, Section 4*, p. 191.

³ *Loc. cit.*

⁴ *Opus cit. Passed at the Second Session of the Forty-first Congress. Public No. 185, Section 18*, p. 296.

that the policy now pursued will in a few years bring all the Indians upon reservations, where they will live in houses and have schoolhouses and churches, and will be pursuing peaceful and self-sustaining avocations.⁵

Such was Grant's "Indian Peace Policy," as it was called. As a matter of fact, it was an apple of discord from its inauguration until its abrogation in 1881.

In 1876 there were seventy-seven governmental agencies for the Indian. According to the principles set up by the Government for the allotment of these agencies to religious groups, forty of these agencies should have been granted to the Catholics. As it turned out, however, only seven were put in Catholic hands. Of these seven agencies, two were in the Dakota Territory.⁶ Standing Rock (first located at Grand River) was the location of one of the two agencies, and the other was at Devils Lake. Both locations were in the country of the dreaded *Sioux*. (The word *Sioux* is the shortened form of *Nadouessioux*—"Snakes," "Enemies"—so the Chippewas called them; the Sioux, however, called themselves *Dakota*—"Confederates," "Friends." They were divided into several separate groups or bands.)

Unfortunately, at the beginning of Grant's new ordering of Indian affairs, the Catholics had no organization to present and carry forward their interests at Washington. To supply this need, Archbishop Bayley, of Baltimore, established the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions on January 2, 1874, at first known as the Office of the Catholic Commissioner for Indian Missions. General Charles Ewing, who had been active in this work since 1873, was made the Commissioner and the Very Reverend J. B. A. Brouillet its Treasurer and Director-General. Further, a number of Catholic ladies, among them Mrs. General Sherman, sister of Charles Ewing, met at Washington on October 28, 1875, to organize as The Ladies'

⁵ *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897), IX, 4063-4064.

⁶ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior*. 1878, p. 312.

Catholic Indian Missionary Association of Washington, D. C. The purpose of this Association was to raise funds in behalf of the Indian missions. To accomplish that purpose, they appealed to the Catholic women throughout the United States to organize into "Bands" co-operating with the Association. Whatever funds would be raised by this Association, or would otherwise be contributed, were to be devoted in the first place to the Bureau, to enable it to carry on; the Bureau was to use the remainder directly for the missions.⁷

However, the young organization had great difficulty in procuring missionaries for even the few agencies allotted to the Catholic Church; there was no desire among the clergy, not even among the Orders or religious congregations usually associated with mission work, to undertake the uninviting task.

Mrs. Maria Griswold, of Terre Haute, a former parishioner of the Benedictines there and a friend of Abbot Martin, requested Abbot Martin to introduce the Catholic Indian Mission Association into the parishes of Southern Indiana of which the Benedictines had charge. He replied that though he personally was greatly interested, he could do nothing in the parishes without the approval of the Bishop. But the Bishop preferred the Association for the Propagation of the Faith and was not in favor of any other mission society. But, so the Abbot assured her, since he himself had always had a predilection for the Indian missions, he would prefer to undertake in person the founding of a monastery which by its life of prayer and work would lead the Indians to Christianity and civilization. (Abbot Martin's predilection for the Indian missions dated back to the time when he was still a student. In the name of the student body he had welcomed the famous procurator of the Jesuit Indian Missions, Father De Smet.) Mrs. Griswold at once reported to Mrs. General Sherman, at St. Louis, and Mrs. Sherman informed the Mission Bureau in Washington that the Benedictines were willing to undertake missionary work among the Indians.

⁷ *Manual of the Catholic Indian Missionary Association.*

On May 3, 1876, Abbot Martin wrote to Brouillet for further details; but he stressed the point that he did not want to be in the way of anybody else.

Brouillet was glad at the prospect of finally obtaining missionaries for the important yet difficult Sioux reservation at Standing Rock. Answering the Abbot's letter on May 11, he assured him that at Standing Rock the Benedictines "would not be in anybody's way," but that for the present the difficulty was that the Administrator of the Vicariate of Nebraska, pending the appointment of a new Vicar Apostolic, did not want to enter into any commitments with regard to introducing a religious community. Brouillet already spoke of two Fathers that ought to be sent. However, the Abbot might meanwhile go to Standing Rock merely to ascertain whether the field of work would be agreeable to the Benedictines and to take care of the current spiritual needs; for that purpose the Administrator would gladly grant faculties to any of the Fathers recommended by Brouillet.⁸ At that period the country of the Sioux reservation of Standing Rock and the region south thereof belonged to the Vicariate of Nebraska.

Abbot Martin informed Brouillet that he was ready not only to make a short visit but to start work immediately. Brouillet answered that Abbot Martin should bring everything necessary for saying Mass; that for the time being he should not take along a Brother, since as yet there was no provision for lodging except in the house used by the Agent; and with regard to financial matters: "We of course

⁸ Apart from St. M. Ll. and other material kept in St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, the events recorded in this chapter are based on letters, and on retainers of such, kept at the Catholic Indian Mission Bureau, Washington, D.C.; archives of the Department of the Interior, and of the War Department, Washington, D.C.; diocesan archives, Omaha, Neb.; archives of the various missions; and on the memoranda and oral interviews with many of the earlier missionaries and Indians, most of them now gone to their reward. The Mrs. Griswold mentioned was a life-long devoted friend of the Benedictines, especially of Abbots Martin and Fintan, whose acquaintance she had made at Terre Haute. See her letter, Oct. 20, 1896, to Abbot Fintan. St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, Abbot Fintan's correspondence, 1896, folder G.

do not wish to make this office liable for any sum beyond your expenses on this trip. Beyond that, all that we can pledge ourselves to is that we will be as liberal in our gifts from time to time to your new establishment, if you conclude to found one at Standing Rock Agency, as our treasury and the demands upon it will admit." On June 24, Abbot Martin informed the agent at Standing Rock that he would leave St. Meinrad on about July 1.

The Abbot had made all these arrangements without the knowledge of his monastic council, which consisted of Father Prior Fintan, Father Subprior Wolfgang, and Father Isidor.⁹ Only after he had determined upon the day of his departure did he, on the evening previous to it, put the whole project before them. He told them that he himself would go to see what could be done and to inaugurate the work. He said that he expected to be absent two or three months. They should think over the project.

When Abbot Martin made his intention known also to the community at large and called for volunteers, Father Chrysostom, who had but recently returned from Einsiedeln, spoke up: "'Lo, here am I, send me.' God has given me health, energy, and strength; I am ready to go to Standing Rock." The Abbot was silent for a moment, then said: "You are the one, and I, I am the second." Little, cheerful Brother Giles Laugel, who was just completing his twentieth year, also volunteered.

Two months later, Prior Fintan wrote about the whole matter to the Dean of Einsiedeln:

... The time—it was just before Complin [that the Abbot informed us of it]—did not allow us to enter upon it more carefully except to object that his prolonged absence would harm the monastery. . . . Taking for granted that he would make merely an exploratory trip, we let it go at that; but now his intention seems to be to remain longer. He is calling Father Chrysostom, who departs today, and a Brother who is very desirous of going. What his further inten-

⁹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Prior Fintan to Dean Ildephons, Sept. 15, 1876; P. Wolfgang to the Dean, August 31, 1876).

tions are in this, he has not said, except, I believe, that he is of the opinion that he has a more grateful field of work among the Indians than here among the Germans. The people here have bothered him greatly with borrowing money and have caused him much trouble. That may have been a contributing factor; but I believe that he intends to devote himself to the mission from higher motives—from zeal for the salvation of souls—inasmuch as even in earlier years he spoke of it and said we should make ourselves fit for mission work.¹⁰

According to Abbot Martin's own statements, this undertaking was motivated by his understanding of the purpose and nature of the Order of St. Benedict—an opinion with which some at Einsiedeln and elsewhere did not agree—and of a principle in religious life that he had adopted in his novitiate and upon which he had acted ever since. On November 20, 1876, he wrote to Prior Frowin of Conception:

The conversion and civilization of pagan peoples was the task of the Benedictines at all times, and if they had stayed at it, there would not now be still 500 million children "in darkness and in the shadow of death."

The education of several generations is unthinkable without stability, and the family life of a genuine Benedictine family, embracing the material as well as the spiritual progress, is the exemplar and ideal of the Christian family life, upon which the welfare of the individual and of society rests. The *ora et labora* is today still the only remedy for healing the children of Adam and neither the one nor the other can be taught in words alone.¹¹

Abbot Martin wrote in a similar vein to his friend James A. McMaster, the editor of the New York *Freeman's Journal*:

It seems God's will that the Benedictine Order should in our days resume the missionary work among the heathens.

¹⁰ *Loc. cit.*

¹¹ Conception Abbey archives (Abbot Martin to Prior Frowin, Nov. 20, 1876); St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Abbot Martin to Abbot Basil, Sept. 15, 1876).

I had spoken of this in a letter to Mrs. Griswold, who spoke of it to the Ladies of the I.A. [Indian Association], and to my great surprise I received the invitation from V. Rev. Brouillet to take charge of the Sioux at this Agency. After due deliberation and after ascertaining that nobody would take pity on them, I resolved to go and myself see what could be done.¹²

And on July 9, 1878, writing again to Prior Frowin, he said:

I took over the Dakota missions in the name of the Benedictine Order. I did so because neither the secular clergy nor any other religious Order wanted to enter upon this work; yet till this hour no other Benedictine family has offered either persons or means to support me in this work of the conversion of pagans, work that was formerly a very familiar one to the sons of St. Benedict and well accomplished by them. But then, the Benedictines in Australia fared no better, and the Benedictine missions in Africa got no cooperation from the Order.¹³

And then Abbot Martin added lines that revealed his personal motive:

Even in the days of the Novitiate . . . divine grace gave me the urge to do what nobody else wanted to do, and since then I have always been guided by this rule and perhaps also specially blessed therein. If ever, then now there is apportioned to me a piece of work for which there are no competitors, and I am constantly comforted by the consciousness that He Who shed His precious blood for these souls, too, has given me the will [to undertake this work], and that He will in due time bring about its accomplishment.

Abbot Martin left St. Meinrad for Dakota on July 11. Before his departure he had his choir stall removed and had ordered Prior Fintan to move into the Abbot's room. These measures led some to surmise that he intended to resign before long.

After a number of visits along the route in behalf of the pro-

¹² Notre Dame, Indiana, archives (Abbot Martin Marty, O.S.B., to McMaster, Editor, the *Freeman's Journal*, Feb. 5, 1877).

¹³ Conception Abbey archives (Abbot Martin to Prior Frowin, July 9, 1878).

ject, he arrived by train at Yankton in the evening of July 19. At Yankton, the southeastern entrance to the Dakota Territory, he wanted to avail himself of an opportunity to celebrate Holy Mass; but, unable to show a *celebret* from his superior—since he himself was of course the superior of the Abbey—Father Valentine Sommereisen, the pastor at Yankton, refused to permit him to say Mass.—He came to what was to be his own, and his own received him not.

Abbot Martin boarded a steamboat at Yankton and continued his journey up the Missouri River to Standing Rock. He arrived there on July 31, the eve of the feast of St. Peter in Chains. For that reason and also because the Agent, John Burke, was just then alarmingly beset by the Indians, Abbot Martin dedicated the mission to "St. Peter in Chains." The Agent at first gave him hospitality in his own lodging. Four days later, Ben Smith, the physician at the agency, wrote to General Ewing: "Father Martin arrived several days ago. We all like him and think he will be able to do much good."¹⁴ And on August 7, Abbot Martin wrote to Brouillet: "A good many Indian chiefs, some of whom are baptized, came to see me and expressed their joy at seeing at last a successor to Father De Smet, intending to stay with them." Abbot Martin made it his policy always to cultivate friendship with the chiefs; this procured for him the esteem and reverence of the others, especially of the warriors.

At the arrival of Abbot Martin, the scent of blood was in the air. Custer's forces had been annihilated by the Sioux led by Sitting Bull, of the Uncpapa band, in the battle of Little Big Horn. The rations due to the Indians of the agency had failed to arrive in time; though that was not the Agent's fault, it made the Indians ill-disposed toward him. Additional tension arose from a jurisdictional dispute between the Agent and Captain J. S. Poland. Poland was commander of Fort Yates, a post next to the agency. On account of this tension both Burke and Poland were eventually

¹⁴ Catholic Indian Mission Bureau archives (Smith to Ewing, Aug. 3, 1876).

removed from their positions. Captain R. E. Johnston replaced Poland and temporarily functioned also as Agent.

At that very time, the Abbot prevented the bursting of a storm cloud that was gathering near and in the reservation. Never the man to dramatize his activity, he wrote simply to Abbot Basil of Einsiedeln on December 7, 1876: "Hard as the military control, from September 1 till December 1, was for us and the Indians, it nevertheless brought us great profit. During that time I was their only refuge, and by my presence I have prevented much bloodshed and misery of all sorts." The Commander of the Fort had decided to take from the Indians all firearms, even such as were used merely for hunting. Naturally, the Indians, even those who had no hostile designs, resented the step, and trouble was brewing. It was then that Abbot Martin hurried from camp to camp and dissuaded the Indians from offering a resistance that would have been doomed to be fatal.

The success of Abbot Martin should have made Captain Johnston appreciate the missionary's presence; but it did not. The episode is here transcribed from an article, "The Beginnings of Catholicism," by Bishop Shanley, of Fargo:

This was a most turbulent and threatening time, being shortly after the Custer massacre when in the battle of Little Big Horn in Montana, June 25, Custer's whole command was wiped out of existence. The participants in that tragic battle were all Indians of the Sioux tribe, the greater number of whom belonged to the Standing Rock agency. Captain Johns[t]on assigned to Abbot Marty a small room to live in, in an old log building the roof of which was covered with mud. However, the military authorities were soon to recognize the usefulness of Abbot Marty.

Shortly after his arrival, bands of hostile Indians, under the leadership of Chief Kill-Eagle, who had just come from the bloody battle field of Little Big Horn, made their appearance and tried to induce the Standing Rock Indians to duplicate the slaughter of Montana. They were all assembled on the plain west of the military post, mounted and heavily armed, in battle array. The inhabitants of the



STANDING ROCK AGENCY AND MISSION

Fort Yates to the right. The "Standing Rock"—a boulder, 3 feet high and roughly representing a squaw—originally stood on the hillside overlooking the Agency. It was an object of Indian lore.

garrison were much alarmed, knowing the overwhelming strength and daring bravery of the Sioux warriors. At that moment of impending danger one could see a solitary horseman, attired in the garb of a Benedictine monk, galloping toward the sullen, hostile warriors, who received him with great respect. It was Abbot Marty. In him they recognized the black gown, and their former love and esteem for the great missionary, Father De Smet, whom they had known, roused their savage hearts to better sentiments. They listened to Abbot Marty attentively, and, submitting to his fatherly advice and pleadings for peace, dismounted and gave up their arms, which the soldiers gathered up in wagon loads. Thus was peace restored through the gentleness, courage, and apostolic zeal of that humble and holy monk. One would naturally think that the military showed themselves grateful to that good Abbot; but far from it. Captain Johns[t]on, the military Agent, seeing the great confidence the Indians showed to Abbot Marty, and loath to see anyone esteemed above himself, went to Abbot Marty, informed him that he must vacate his dingy little room, and showed by his demeanor that the Abbot's presence was no longer needed among the Indians. Abbot Marty appealed to the authorities at Washington, and, as a reply, Captain Johns[t]on was at once relieved [December 1] of his office as Indian Agent, and a civilian in the person of W. F. Hughes, of Chicago, was installed. Some years afterwards Captain Johns[t]on died in an insane asylum.¹⁵

It had not taken Abbot Martin long to see that his plans for Christianizing and civilizing the Sioux by founding at Standing Rock a Benedictine monastery could not be carried out, though he continued to entertain hopes in that regard. The barrenness of the soil in general, grasshopper plagues, and droughts would permit agriculture only on a small scale; hence it would also be useless to teach the Indians trades beyond a narrow limit. He agreed with the agent that the Sioux ought to be removed to a country better suited for agriculture. As the situation was, it would be more practical to found only a mission station with a school. He also pointed out

¹⁵ *Grand Forks Daily Herald*, April 6, 1902.

that the proximity of the military at Fort Yates, with its usual camp morals, had a bad influence on the Indians. Further, he condemned the ration system: "The policy of the U. S. [of doling out rations] has made these people a set of idlers, loafers, and beggars, and as long as the military shall control them, it will be impossible to change their situation and character, no matter how good the intention of superior officers may be. It is not in the power of mortals to change the nature of things."¹⁶

Shortly thereafter Abbot Marty again wrote to Brouillet that the founding of schools, stipulated in the treaty with the Sioux, should be insisted upon. And he continued:

But the main thing is to make the Indians work, and that can only be done if they have each his own homestead. . . . The land given to them should be surveyed immediately and animals and instruments provided to work it. St. Paul's rule must be gradually enforced: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." If they remain here, grazing and stock raising will probably be the main thing, the country not being favorable to agriculture.

To show the Indians how to work, I would like to get about 600 acres of land, on which to build our monastery, and 300 in another place for the Sisters' farm and Convent.

I would have the Indians themselves build the boarding school for their children, the churches, and their own homes; if the instruments are furnished, the carpenter of the agency and our Brothers can teach the Indians how to use them.

They never appreciate what is given to them, and education and religious instruction would never strike deep roots if they were offered without cost. You must either ask them to pay in some way for the education of their children or they will ask you to pay for sending them. There is not much nobility about paganism, whatever infidels may say or write to undervalue thereby the necessity or the benefits of Christianity. At any rate, one will have to take the Sioux as they are and be satisfied with small results in the beginning. If the alternative, to work or to starve,

¹⁶ Marty to Brouillet, Aug. 7; Oct. 28, 1876.

is finally set before them, they will submit to the former; and if this first remedy prescribed in paradise is brought to bear upon their case, it will prepare the way for all the others.¹⁷

The execution of these plans would call for reinforcements. Having acquainted himself with the state of affairs, and especially having learned that the military powers at the Fort were scheming to have the agency handed over to some Protestant denomination because the Catholics as yet had done nothing, Abbot Martin thought it necessary to change his original plan of making a merely exploratory trip; he ordered Father Chrysostom and Brother Giles to come at once to begin regular mission work, thus to deprive the opponents of the pretense under which they had planned to turn this agency over to a non-Catholic denomination. Unable to send traveling money for the two, Abbot Martin instructed Father Chrysostom to obtain the necessary sum, \$250, by conducting missions and doing similar work in Indiana. The Fathers at St. Meinrad, upon hearing of the quick development of the work, now disapproved it still more because they thought St. Meinrad was not yet strong enough for such an undertaking.¹⁸

Father Chrysostom and Brother Giles arrived at Standing Rock on October 2. Throughout the winter, all three devoted themselves to learning the Sioux language; in this, Brother Giles, who was young and who dealt largely with the Indian boys, in time became the most proficient. The Abbot spoke grammatical Sioux very well; but on account of the many dialects prevailing among the Indians he was not known ever to have ventured a sermon or an important transaction with them without an interpreter.

The first two months had been exceptionally hard by reason of the attitude of Captain Johnston.¹⁹ One portion of an old log theater

¹⁷ Nov. 21, 1876.

¹⁸ Notre Dame, Indiana, archives (Abbot Martin Marty, O.S.B., to McMaster, Editor, the *Freeman's Journal*, Feb. 5, 1877); St. M. Ll. VII, pp. 827-829 (Wolfgang to the Dean, Aug. 31, 1877).

¹⁹ The details of the living conditions of those two months are from "A Pioneer's Own Story," by Brother Giles.

with a leaking mud roof was their living quarters. It was furnished with one table and a bedstead with a mattress for the Abbot; at night, two other mattresses were placed on the floor—as much as possible under the table whenever the rain soaked through the roof. The little group arose at 3:30 in the morning and recited the Divine Office in common, as at St. Meinrad; at times, when Father Chrysostom was out on missions, the Abbot and Brother Giles alone constituted the two “choirs.” A period of meditation followed the Divine Office. After meditation, the Abbot and Father Chrysostom alternated saying Mass. They used the table as an altar; Brother Giles served. In rainy weather he held an umbrella over the Celebrant. After the Masses, the sacred linens and vessels were carefully stored away. Breakfast was then served. This consisted of hardtack with hot water poured over it, seasoned with a little salt and pepper, and “a chunk of butter mixed with it.” “It wasn’t bad,” wrote Brother Giles, the cook. Later on, they received baker’s bread and bacon from the soldiers’ Commissary. Their condition improved considerably when a Catholic Civil Agent took over at the agency.

A rumor current at the agency that Sitting Bull had in his youth been baptized by Father De Smet and that he wanted a black robe missionary ripened a plan in Abbot Martin’s mind that entailed new hardships for him. After the battle at Little Big Horn, Sitting Bull, together with 4,000 followers, hard pressed by the U. S. Army, eventually, in January and February, 1877, sought refuge in the British Possessions. A number of other bands, mistrusting the promises of the United States Government, likewise refused to come to the Reservation, where the Government had pledged itself to support them and help them become civilized. All these Indians, and especially Sitting Bull with his well-known hostile feeling toward the Government, were a constant threat to the peace of the territory. To break up these focal points of Sioux resistance, the Army was planning new expeditions against the Sioux. In view of all this, Abbot Martin, the good shepherd of the Indians, resolved to seek his

scattered sheep and, if circumstances would warrant it, bring them back safely on the Reservation. He wrote to Brouillet:

I consider it my duty to do my possible [*sic*] to prevent further bloodshed and misery. It is to be feared that from the battlefields there are very few souls going to a good place. If there is any possibility at all, I shall, then, visit the hostile camp or camps before the opening of the spring campaign and induce the deluded men to come on the Missouri, where the work of their civilization can be commenced at once.

I have no idea what you will be able to do for my clients and myself, but the Indian Department, if sincere in its dealings, should not be unwilling to make use of this last means before resolving upon extermination of these unfortunate people.

I know from the conversation with several officers now employed against the Indians that such is their only intention, and if you read General Terry's last report, you will come to the same conclusion. There is no time to be lost, and I most anxiously await your communications upon the subject.²⁰

The Catholic Commissioner submitted this petition to the Department of the Interior, which, having referred it to the War Department, received the following answer, dated March 12, 1877:

This department has no objections to permission being given to the Revd. Abbot Martin to go out to the hostile Sioux at his own risk with the understanding that he goes in no manner as an emissary of the Government of the United States and that the military operations now in progress be not delayed, modified or altered because of his personal sacrifice.²¹

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior, in turn, on March 14, notifying the Agent at Standing Rock, added:

²⁰ Marty to Brouillet, Jan. 22, 1877; *Der Wanderer*, St. Paul, Minn. Sept. 1, 1877. *Abt Marty bei Sitting Bull*.

²¹ Correspondence in this transaction is in the archives of the Department of the Interior, of the War Department, and of the Catholic Indian Mission Bureau.

He will do so, however, at his own expense, but may take for an escort a few of the Indians most suitable for that purpose from your agency. The party may receive rations and such transportation as can be spared from the agency; but no other expense will be incurred on this account.

In answer to an inquiry about the terms that might be offered the hostile Indians, the Indian Commissioner answered, on March 21, that the same conditions were to be offered them as had been given to those who already had returned to the agencies. The terms required their surrender as prisoners of war and their thorough and complete dismounting and disarming.

In Bismarck Abbot Martin had begun to organize a mission with a church and school for the white population. On April 10, he returned from Bismarck. With his forthcoming visit to the hostile Indians in mind, he wrote to Brouillet from the commanding officer's house at Fort Lincoln: "I hope to be more successful than the man [Custer] who in this very room in which I write to you these lines was last year forming his plans for an Indian campaign. And happy would I be if I could sacrifice to God what Custer threw away to the world."

Consulting with a number of Indians at Standing Rock, he found that though some were willing to accompany him, they were much afraid of a hostile reception on the part of Sitting Bull because they had turned down his request that they follow him into the British Possessions. Therefore Abbot Martin resolved to go alone by boat up to Fort Buford, at the beginning of May. At Fort Buford he expected to have a better opportunity of weighing his chances of benefiting the hostile Indians by his visit. At any rate, his trip would give many Catholic soldiers and their families along the river an opportunity to comply with their Easter duties.²²

From Fort Buford he went to Fort Peck (Poplar Creek Agency), in northern Montana. Informed that Sitting Bull and his followers

²² Marty to Brouillet, Apr. 25, 1877; St. M. Ll. XIII, p. 1518 (Chrysostom to Abbot Basil, March 28, 1877).

had fled to the British Possessions, Marty obtained a horse, and he secured the services of eight Indians as companions and scouts.²³ William Halsey, a half-breed interpreter, also accompanied him. Halsey was a Catholic and was very devoted to Abbot Martin.²⁴ On May 18, the party headed northward into 140 miles of wilderness. Bad weather and his scouts' ignorance of the country delayed them; it was only on May 26 that they approached the camp of Sitting Bull.

Apprised by one of the scouts of the approach of the party, Sitting Bull with a select troop of a hundred mounted warriors came two miles to meet them. Recognizing the black robe, the dreaded savage greeted him as a friend and with the greatest demonstration of honor led him into his own tent where in Indian fashion he entertained him most generously. "You come from America, indeed," he said, "but you are a priest and as such you are welcome. The priest does nobody any harm; we will give you food and protection and will listen to your words."

After but a few hours of observation the Abbot was sure that the rumors about Sitting Bull's conversion to the faith were without foundation. "He is," the Abbot wrote, "what his forebears were, a savage pagan; and also among his adherents the instructions of earlier missionaries have not taken root." The Abbot continued that upon personal observation the picture he had made for himself of the renowned chief became very disappointing. "Sitting Bull possesses the cunning of the redskin in a high degree and, if civilized, would without doubt have become an astute diplomat and a sly demagogue. He knows how to hold the allegiance of his people, especially by seeking to satisfy their passions in every possible manner and by always following the will and wishes of the majority."

In a council with Sitting Bull and his followers, Abbot Martin pointed out to the Indians that they could not remain permanently in Canada, particularly since their food supply from hunting would

²³ Abbot Martin to Bishop O'Connor, June 5, 1878.

²⁴ According to the missionary, Father Fintan Wiederkehr, O.S.B.; Anton Huonder, S.J., *Banner-träger des Kreuzes; Amerika*, 25 Februar, 1917, *Bischof Marty und Sein Werk*.

eventually give out. On the other hand, he told them, they were free to return to the Reservation assigned to them.

Attentive and friendly, Sitting Bull replied that so long as there was good hunting in the British possessions and the authorities



SITTING BULL

were dealing with him in a humane manner, he saw no reason why his followers and he himself should return to a state of insecurity in the United States. But when livelihood became impossible, he said, he would follow the advice of the black robe.

To assure the black robe that the English were well disposed

toward the Indians, Sitting Bull after several councils requested some officers of Fort Walsh to come to his camp. When on the eighth day after the Abbot's arrival Major Walsh and two captains of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police had come, Sitting Bull, pointing to the Abbot, but addressing the officers, said: "That is our friend—a good man and a priest, who has come far to tell us what to do. We want to tell him if the English are willing for us to stay on their soil." The officers replied that the Indians were free to return to their own country, but that they also might stay if they were law-abiding.

Abbot Martin knew that the Indians could count on good buffalo hunting for some time and that the hunt would further serve as an outlet for their wild energies. He also knew that the Indians on the reservations were often hungry and that their lack of occupation very often led to moral degeneration. And so he told them not to hurry their return to the United States. At the conclusion of the council, Abbot Martin promised the Indians that he would try to make more satisfactory arrangements for them and that he would let them know when the conditions for their return would be more favorable.²⁵

Even at that, some smaller bands did return to the United States; they settled on the Devils Lake Reservation, as Abbot Martin informed Brouillet on July 9, 1878. In the same letter he wrote: "I saw Major Walsh one month ago, and he assured me that if we would act in concert we could settle this international question without any more expense." But in the meantime the United States Government continued to spend millions in its campaign against the hostile Indians.

From Sitting Bull's camp Abbot Martin returned to Fort Peck. He arrived there on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, June 8 of

²⁵ Marty to Brouillet, June 27, 1877; "Abbot Martin visits Sitting Bull," *Annals of the Cath. Indian Missions* II (1878), 7-19; *Der Wanderer*, St. Paul, Minn., Sept. 1; Sept. 29; Oct. 20, 1877. These last two articles were originally published in the German *Amerika*, St. Louis; they were reprinted by *Der Wanderer*. They were written by Abbot Martin, who on his way back to St. Meinrad stopped off at St. Louis. The first article was based on information furnished by him and was factual, except in minor details.

that year. While at Fort Peck, he wrote these memorable words to Abbot Basil: "Yesterday, on the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and today, on the feast of the Most Pure Heart [of Mary] in which the Christians at all times have sought and found help, I have consecrated and recommended the Dakota nation and all its present and future missionaries to these most holy hearts."²⁶

His consuming zeal for the salvation of the Dakota nation also appears from his saving adaptation of Cato's destroying prepossession, "*Denique censeo gentem Dakotam esse salvandam.*"²⁷

Writing to Brouillet on June 27, he gave the state of his health as an excuse for not having given sooner a more detailed account of his trip to Sitting Bull's camp. But Bishop Shanley wrote: "The privations which Abbot Marty underwent during that trip so enfeebled his health that he nearly died and had to be carried on a stretcher aboard the steamer that left Fort Peck for Bismarck. . . . Whilst in Bismarck, the Abbot held services for the few Catholics there, and made a house to house collection to save the old church, which was heavily in debt, from being sold";²⁸ only then did he return to Standing Rock, where he landed on June 16, after an absence of seven weeks.

In view of his contemplated return to St. Meinrad, he had sent word to the Abbey that four more men, two Fathers and two Brothers should depart for the missions; however, at the time only one Father, but no Brother, was available. Father Jerome Hund, O.S.B., arrived at Standing Rock toward the end of June.²⁹

The new Agent, W. T. Hughes, in his first report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs wrote on August 23, 1877: "The three reverend gentlemen that are stationed here, viz, Rev. Abbot Martin, Rev. John Chrysostom, and Rev. Hunt Jerome, are all very superior, talented, and cultivated gentlemen, and it is something very remark-

²⁶ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (June 9, 1877).

²⁷ St. M. Ll. VIII, pp. 1020-1021 (Abbot Martin to Abbot Basil, May 8, 1878); to Bishop O'Connor, May 2, 1879.

²⁸ *Grand Forks Daily Herald*, April 6, 1902.

²⁹ Later his name always was written "Hunt."

able to see three such persons devoting their lives in an isolated place like this to the advancement of the condition of a race who do not seem to appreciate the value of their labors. These good men have rendered me very great assistance in controlling and governing the Indians."³⁰ Of the condition of the agency and of his mood at being there, Hughes, the salaried government official, had on December 1, 1876, written to General Ewing, of the Catholic Indian Mission Bureau: "Of all the desolate and God-forsaken looking places that I have ever been in, this takes the lead"; and on July 7, 1877, he had written to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at Washington:

... On Sunday night the 1st inst we had a very heavy rain storm accompanied with strong wind, which became so violent at one time that we thought all our buildings would be demolished, the rain poured in through every roof of the agency damaging nearly everything under them, as the water coming through dirt roofs is always black and dirty. ... My own household goods were almost deluged, which provoked me very much. In fact I became so much discouraged with everything here that I felt as though I ought to send in my resignation and leave this miserable place.

... The winters here are very severe and in summer season a person is devoured both day and night with [?] mosquitoes, fleas, and bedbugs all of which abound here in such quantities that I dare not attempt to describe them. With such annoyances to continue [and] countless other difficulties and privations that one has to submit to here ... they are enough to disgust anyone who has ever enjoyed a reasonable share of the world's comforts. ...³¹

Yet the three Fathers, the Brothers, and within a year, the Benedictine Sisters, for the love of God and of souls volunteered to live and work in those surroundings.

³⁰ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs...* Washington, 1877. pp. 73-74.

³¹ To the knowledge of the author, this report has not been printed; it is kept in the U.S. Archives, Department of the Interior.

Realizing that the conversion and civilization of the Dakota Indians would best be accomplished through the children and that these would be influenced best by a boarding school—a day school would have been, under the circumstances, a waste of time and energy—Abbot Martin some time before his departure for the British Possessions had ordered Father Chrysostom to get a boarding school started. Since the Government would have nothing to do with building and equipping a school—by treaty it had obligated itself merely to paying a teacher the salary of \$40 a month—it was Father Chrysostom's and Brother Giles' task to scratch a school out of Standing Rock.

First they got the Agent's permission to turn into a school and dormitory an old building which the soldiers had formerly used as a theater, but that was now a rummage room, and an old warehouse connected with the room occupied by the missionaries: the school-room was made to serve also as dining room for the boys. Then they hunted up all old boxes and all boards that were not nailed down.

A carpenter, an Irishman whom the Agent had dismissed for drunkenness, asked Father Chrysostom to let him work merely for board and lodging. Father Chrysostom accepted his offer, but only after he had given him a much-needed spiritual straightening out.

The chapel space was enlarged and equipped with rudely made furniture, and the rough walls near the altar were covered with muslin. Of course all stationery articles had to be furnished by the missionaries, and during the first year they had to furnish even the food for the children. The dormitory had crude bunks fastened onto the walls.

Some work tools were obtained so that the Indian boys might learn not only to pray and to do school work but also to do manual work. The boys had no idea of plowing, planting, mowing, and so forth. When, later, one of the Brothers was plowing a field, an Indian called out to him, "Brother, you are spoiling the prairie."³²

³² St. M. Ll. XIII, pp. 1518-1521 (Chrysostom to Abbot Basil, March 28, 1877); St. Meinrad Archabbey archives ("A Pioneer's Own Story," Brother Giles Laugel, O.S.B.); partly according to the Brother's oral narrative.

A spoon and a fork were quite a novelty to most of the Indians. None of them had ever slept in a bed, wrote Father Chrysostom. And he continued:

Whilst I am writing these lines, an Indian sits opposite to me, astonished at what I am doing. If a washwoman wanted to wash his shirt, she would have to take the fellow by the ears, because he wears no shirt nor hardly anything else except that up to his neck he is wrapped in a coarse buffalo hide; only when he wanted to shake hands with me did I notice what he had—or had not—as underwear. This red fellow, who, however, thank God, belongs to the minority of our savages, reminds me of an adventure that our friend, General Hazen, had last summer at Fort Buford. His wife had come into the wilderness to visit him for a few weeks. One of the chiefs of our Indians, who was well acquainted with the General, heard of that and wanted to pay also Madam General a visit. Well, one fine morning, when as yet nobody thought of any harm—least of all the Indian in question—there suddenly was a vigorous knocking at the door. As chance would have it, Madam Hazen herself came to the door. But who will describe the horror of the fine lady upon opening the door! A scream! A dash to the maid in the kitchen! A violent wringing of the hands and a still more violent trembling of the knees was the work of one moment. For, when instead of Madam General the maid came to the door, she there saw the six-foot-tall Indian chief standing alone at the door. But, except for an apron-like small loin cloth, he was unclothed; and—what may have scared her still more—he besides the loin cloth wore nothing but a paper collar and a stovepipe hat. [The Indian had observed that on formal occasions “paleface” officials always wore a high collar and a stovepipe hat.] Fortunately the General soon was at hand. Because the Chief was in the best of faith and only wondered at the queer demeanor of Madam General, the General had to admit the visitor into the house. And because the Chief by all means wanted to pay his respects to Madam General, the General had to give him one of his older uniforms to put on before he could call Madam in to meet the visitor. After this singular visit, the savage, clothed in the Gener-

al's uniform, with pride and majesty came forth from the house and to the great delight of the soldiers went his way in stoic calm and dignity. The poor savage believed he should repeatedly visit Madam Hazen, but, to the delight of the whole garrison, always in the General's uniform, which, however, he wore only on such occasions; otherwise he throughout the summer always appears in costume as above—minus paper collar and stovepipe hat, which latter he wears only when it is very hot.³³

At first, the school was only for boys. The lads were from ten to fifteen years of age. "The boys fortunately were good-natured," reminisced little Brother Giles, "and as I felt like a boy myself, I had my fun with them. They did as I did and worked with me as I did and we got along well." He learned most of his *Dakota iapi* (language) from them.

The Brother soon noticed that the boys were quite proud of their long, straight, black hair, which they neatly plaited into braids; they considered those braids not only an ornament but a sign of their native, independent state. All persuasion on the part of Brother Giles was futile. Finally, he took one boy aside and offered him a quarter if he would allow his hair to be cut. After much hesitation on the part of the boy, the quarter won out. After a while, a second, then a third came voluntarily to have his hair cut for a quarter—at the barber's expense. More came, "but," said Brother Giles, "I ran out of quarters." So Brother Giles said no more about it and acted as though he did not care. After a while, the boys seeing the advantage of having their hair cut short, came of their own accord and begged him to cut their hair.

The boys showed their interest in what he was doing by being willing to help him. He got some chickens, built coops for them, got eggs from them, and also raised young chicks. He started a garden, and so had vegetables for the table—especially radishes, for which the Indians had a great liking. Thus they were induced individually to work little patches of ground of their own.

³³ Father Chrysostom, l. c.

At a proper distance from the other buildings he had the boys dig a lengthy pit, over which he began to construct a shed with several small compartments on one side, each compartment with its own door. That at first puzzled the boys; yet, when they understood, "they were pleased," said Brother Giles.—Rudimentary civilization.

The boys helped also in the kitchen and dining room both before and after meals. "One of the chiefs, a bony fellow, over seven foot tall, Long Soldier was his name, would come to take what [food] the boys had left. One morning, everything was eaten up, and the poor fellow had nothing to chew on. He got angry—or pretended to be really mad—and threatened to kill me. I bravely told him to go ahead and then he too would be killed. He left, and everybody had the laugh on him. He never again came back for leavings."

From 1878 on, each one who taught at the mission school received from the Government a salary of \$40 a month. Brother Giles wrote: "We [now] could pay for what we needed. We also built a neat little church of brick and, though it must have cost several hundred dollars, paid for it out of our salaries."³⁴ The altarpiece, a painting representing St. Peter, was a gift of Sister Maura's parents.

It might here be remarked that from the beginning of these missions to the present day, St. Meinrad has not asked for a cent of the money that the Fathers and Brothers received either as teachers' salaries or as personal donations; even the Mass stipends of the Fathers were devoted to the support and the development of the missions. From 1878 to 1953 there has been an annual average of ten men on the missions, men that could have been employed very usefully at home, and so one may conjecture the Abbey's financial contribution to the missions.

The Abbot's absence from St. Meinrad had been prolonged beyond three months, and the Fathers at the Abbey became alarmed and

³⁴ This brick church still stands; the frame addition to it is a more recent construction.

wrote to him accordingly. He himself wrote to the Abbot of Einsiedeln that he was willing to ask Rome to accept his resignation as Abbot, so that he might devote himself exclusively to the missions.³⁵

In spring, 1877, the Abbot sent orders for two more Fathers—one of whom would first have to be ordained—and two Brothers to proceed to Dakota, and asked also that four Sisters from Ferdinand be sent there. But Bishop de St. Palais declared that he would not ordain anyone who was to be sent to the missions and that the Sisters were under his jurisdiction; he also complained that the Abbey was thinning out its personnel too much to do justice to the seminary and to the mission work within the Diocese. Thereupon all the Fathers at the Abbey, including the Prior, sent the Abbot a joint letter demanding his return to the Abbey.

The Abbot arrived at St. Meinrad on August 14, after an absence of thirteen months. From a year's exposure to the inclemencies of the Dakota climate, his skin was tanned like that of an Indian.

When Prior Fintan presented to him the opinions of the Fathers concerning a number of points, for instance the joint Novitiate and the choir arrangement, he merely answered: "We differ greatly in our views."³⁶ Nor would he relent in his determination to have the Abbey strenuously further the Dakota missions, though he told Fathers Wolfgang and Isidor that he had come home to stay.

Bishop de St. Palais died on June 28, 1877. Some claimed to have it on good authority that Abbot Martin was on Archbishop Purcell's list of three candidates for the vacant episcopal see of Vincennes; further, a number of the secular clergy made efforts to propose his name. Even the Catholic Indian Mission Bureau had wind of what it called "your prospective promotion to the Bishopric of Vincennes"; it regretted losing him for the Indian missions.³⁷ On the other hand, Father Bessonies, the Administrator of the Diocese,

³⁵ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (March 21, 1877).

³⁶ St. M. Ll. VII, pp. 827-828 (Wolfgang to the Dean, Aug. 31, 1877).

³⁷ St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1210 (Isidor to the Dean, July 9, 1877); p. 1206 (Isidor to Abbot Basil, shortly after Aug. 1877); Catholic Indian Mission Bureau (Ewing to Marty, Sept. 3, 1877).

writing to Archbishop Purcell on August 25, 1877, quoted Bishop (resigned) de la Hailandière, who at that time resided in France, as having written that he did not wish to see a German appointed.³⁸ That same nationalistic spirit that has manifested itself repeatedly in the history of the Church in the United States!

There seems to have been reason for the rumor that Abbot Martin was on the list, for on March 14, 1878, Abbot Martin wrote to Father Chrysostom that Pope Pius IX had nominated Monsignor Chatard Bishop of Vincennes and that Pope Leo XIII without doubt would confirm the nomination. "And so," added the Abbot, "those poor souls will once again come to rest."³⁹

Abbot Marty had scarcely settled down to regular work in the monastery, where he began to instruct some Fathers and Brothers and, at Ferdinand, some Sisters in the Dakota language, when new urgent calls were made on him to expand the mission in Dakota. Brouillet wrote on October 21, 1877, that a Father and a Brother ought to be sent to the Devils Lake Agency at Fort Totten. He added that about Christmas a Bishop in the East would ordain six priests whom he wanted to go to the missions; Brouillet promised them to Abbot Martin for the missions.⁴⁰

But shortly thereafter, General Hammond, in charge of the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies, at that time in northwestern Nebraska, assured the Indian Mission Bureau that these two agencies would be given to the Catholics. The Brulés and the Ogallallas belonged to these agencies. Bishop O'Connor, too, wrote to the Abbot that he should either send a Father from Standing Rock or go in person to these tribes, who seemed to be so well disposed. The Government had assigned these two agencies to the Protestant Episcopal denomination, but the two chiefs, Red Cloud and Spotted Tail, persistently demanded Catholic priests; they continued in that demand

³⁸ Archives, University of Notre Dame, Indiana (Father Aug. Bessonies, Indianapolis, to J. B. Purcell, Aug. 25, 1877).

³⁹ St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 1015.

⁴⁰ Brouillet to Abbot Martin, Oct. 21, 1877.

even after they were transferred, the first to the Pine Ridge Agency, the second to the Rosebud Agency, in the Dakota Territory.

And so Abbot Martin on November 17, 1877, again left St. Meinrad for Dakota. On his way he first visited Bishop O'Connor at Omaha to confer with him about the missions. Bishop O'Connor made him his Vicar General for the Indian missions.

At Omaha another letter from the Indian Mission Bureau reached Abbot Martin in which he was requested to make a pastoral visit to these two agencies and begin regular pastoral work, with a view to establishing permanent missions there.⁴¹

From Omaha Abbot Martin proceeded to Yankton. Navigation on the upper Missouri was out of question in mid-December. Incognito and on horseback, with a coffee pot hanging from his neck and some scant provisions and other essentials in the saddle-bag or tied behind the saddle, Abbot Martin headed west from Yankton.

Abbot Martin's immediate objective was the former Ponca Agency, which lay about seventy miles westward. The route to that agency led at least in part through the Yankton Agency, which Grant's "peace policy" had reserved to the Episcopalians. But because two or three Catholic families lived in the territory of this agency—one of them even on the land which now is the Marty mission property—the Abbot, whenever the occasion presented itself, stopped there secretly to administer to them.

The trip took him three days. When necessary, he prepared his simple meals along the way and at night slept in the snow with a woolen blanket wrapped about him. The intense cold at times pressed tears from his eyes which froze as they trickled down his cheeks. Each of the two Fathers who heard this from the prelate's own lips remarked years later: "That was the only time that I heard him refer to the hardships that he had endured."⁴² But those tears of the good

⁴¹ Omaha archives (Abbot Martin to Bishop O'Connor, Nov. 9, 1877); Cath. Ind. Mission Bureau (R. F. Hunter, Secretary, to Abbot Martin, Nov. 22, 1877; Abbot Martin to Brouillet, Dec. 6, 1877).

⁴² Archives, St. Meinrad Archabbey (Fr. Pius Boehm, O.S.B., to Fr. Fintan Wiederkehr, O.S.B., Aug. 18, 1914); Fr. Ambrose Mattingly's oral narrative

shepherd crystallized into the present great mission establishment of St. Paul at Marty.

Abbot Marty arrived at the "New Spotted Tail Agency" on December 13. Probably because apprised of the Catholic missionary's coming, the Episcopalian Bishop Hare, residing close by, at Niobrara, Nebraska, arrived with one of his clergymen on the same day. Bishop Hare expressed regret that Abbot Martin had come upon the reservation, "because," said the Episcopalian prelate characteristically, "there would be animosity among the lower classes of both denominations and church discipline would certainly suffer."

On December 20, First Lieutenant Lee, acting agent, took the Abbot out to Spotted Tail's old camp, fifty miles away in Nebraska, and introduced him to the Indians as "the man they had desired so long to come among them." They gave him a hearty welcome.⁴³

On January 5, 1878, the Abbot also visited Chief Red Cloud. In company with the other chiefs, Red Cloud likewise expressed his delight at seeing his endeavors to obtain a Catholic priest crowned with success. In a public council on January 6, with Abbot Martin, an Episcopalian minister, and Dr. Irwin, the Agent, in attendance, Red Cloud declared that it was the Catholic priest that he and his people wanted. Dr. Irwin, himself an Episcopalian, told the Abbot that he would give him the same opportunity as his own denomination and that in his opinion the Catholic Church was "on the inside track with these Indians."⁴⁴

About the same time the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions sent Bishop O'Connor several newly ordained priests from an eastern Diocese to serve on the Indian missions. But all of them proved to be very unsatisfactory. And so the burden of attending to the ever

to the author. Fr. Pius, writing loosely from memory, was mistaken in writing that St. Rock was the Abbot's objective. The distance of over 300 miles to St. Rock could not have been covered in three days. Further, Grant's "peace policy" did not exclude him from St. Rock.

⁴³ Abbot Martin to Bishop O'Connor, Dec. 14-23, 1877; Marty to Brouillet, Dec. 23, 1877.

⁴⁴ Abbot Martin to Brouillet, Jan. 14, 1878; to Bishop O'Connor, Jan. 14, 1878.

expanding mission work was made to rest upon the Abbot of St. Meinrad, all the more so now, since he was the Bishop's Vicar General for the Indian missions.⁴⁵

After these important visits to the camps of Spotted Tail and Red Cloud, Abbot Martin returned to St. Meinrad, where he arrived on February 9. Three days later he offered the holy sacrifice of the Mass on Monte Cassino "for the success of our missions," as he wrote to Father Chrysostom on February 12.

Abbot Martin had worked for some time for the introduction into Congress of a bill to obtain an annual appropriation of \$10,000 for three years for the purpose of carrying out a proposed plan for the education of the Indians of the Sioux Nation. The plan called for two establishments, one for each sex, working separately, yet in harmony with each other. It was a very practical plan, aiming at educating the Indian toward self-support instead of leaving him supinely dependent upon a government dole. To enable a child of another agency to transfer to this central school and to insure liberty of conscience for the Indian, a clause permitting "transfer and religious freedom" was inserted in the bill.

This bill was introduced into Congress on March 25, 1878. But on February 13, 1879, Abbot Martin wrote to Bishop O'Connor:

From what Mr. Schurz [Secretary of the Interior] told me, the Protestant league have used every means, money included, to defeat [the guarantee for] the transfer and religious freedom, which was inserted in that bill. Mr. Scales and [Mr.] Fenn [Congressmen] think of introducing the latter separately but doubt the possibility of doing so this session. As our adversaries are so much excited just now, Mr. Schurz thinks it best to let the storm pass and resume work at Spotted Tail and Red Cloud later on.⁴⁶

That Protestant protest against religious freedom certainly is worthy of the records.

On May 19, 1878, the Abbot again set out for Standing Rock, this time with four Benedictine Sisters from the Convent of the Im-

⁴⁵ Marty to Brouillet, Dec. 23, 1877.

⁴⁶ Omaha diocesan archives.

maculate Conception at Ferdinand: Sisters Maura Weyer, Placida Schaefer, Anastasia Sassel, and Rose Chapelle. They arrived at Standing Rock on May 25.⁴⁷

After a few days, so Sister Maura wrote, two of the Sisters, accompanied by an interpreter, went out into the camp to look for prospective pupils for the girls' school. The Indians first inquired how much they would get for sending their children to school. But when told that the Sisters would teach the girls to read and write, to sew, and so forth, the Indians were pleased and willing to send them. These girls, however, not accustomed to the necessary restraints of a boarding school, at first often took to the wide and open spaces toward home; at times they would furtively hide their discarded shawl or blanket behind a wood pile and at an opportune moment slip away, again put on their blanket or shawl after casting off the clothes of civilization that had been given them, and hit the trail for the camp; yet, by the end of the second year at school, they loved to be there so much that they did not want to return to the camp.

The first home of the Sisters and thirty-five girls consisted of a kitchen, a dining room, a sleeping room for the girls, and one room for the Sisters. "The kitchen had no ceiling. At times, mice, running along the rafters, fell down—even onto the stove. The roof was of boards covered with ground; weeds grew on top. . . . In 1878, Mr. Hughes, the Agent, left because the Indians were not satisfied with his handling of their rations; so they tried to get rid of him by putting him in a boat on the Missouri so that he would land where the water would take him; but the soldiers were called and [they] stopped the Indians."⁴⁸

In the course of that year, Abbot Martin had also taken Father Claude Ebner, O.S.B., and Brothers Philip Ketterer, Fridolin Hobi, Nereus Strosyk, and Vital Sproll to Standing Rock. Father Henry Hug, O.S.B., and Brothers January Huber and Andrew Wagner came somewhat later. Brother Nabor Glauber soon replaced Brother Nereus. None of these men had any special training or experience

⁴⁷ St. M. Ll. X, p. 1878 (Fr. Eberhard Stadler to Abbot Basil, Dec. 3, 1878).

⁴⁸ Archives, St. Meinrad Archabbey ("Reminiscences of Sister Maura, O.S.B.").

in the primitive mission life into which they were suddenly placed, and as might be expected, they made mistakes; yet they worked hard, and at the cost of great personal sacrifices.

When Christmas approached, the church was under roof, but not yet plastered. Since Father Jerome had meanwhile moved out to the farm school, the Reverend F. Hendricks, a secular priest from Canada, serving a short time at the mission, ordered the Brothers to whitewash the interior of the church and get it ready for Christmas. But it was so cold that the whitewash, instead of drying normally and binding firmly with the wall and ceiling, froze onto the surface. And when the hurriedly installed stove was fired to warm the church for the midnight Mass, the whitewash thawed and in flickering flakes gently floated down upon the worshippers. And so they had a white Christmas also inside the church. Before Mass, the Solemn Blessing of the church had taken place at eleven o'clock.

The agency was not a suitable place for the girls' school because the soldiers, who came especially on payday and visited the saloons, would at times annoy the girls by knocking on the windows at night; even the Sisters were not spared such an annoyance. For this reason the Reverend J. A. Stephan, who succeeded Hughes as agent, readily consented to the missionaries' building at their own expense an industrial farm school—St. Benedict's—at a sufficient distance from the fort. The new venture was begun in autumn, 1878.

Brother Giles tells about the project in his simple manner:

I was ordered to go sixteen miles [south] from the agency with eleven of the larger boys to start a farm school. What an idea in all the world did I have of starting such a thing! I was clever enough to tackle it. So with my eleven boys [and Brother Philip] I went to the place assigned to us.

The first thing we did was to get a load of wood to cook with. [Meanwhile Brother Philip made a small opening into the side of a knoll, placed the grate of a stove over it, built a fire, and cooked for the construction gang.]

Then we cut the grass and weeds where we were to camp, and put our wagon on an elevated place so that in case of rain the water would flow away. We had bed sheets with

us. We put up some posts around the wagon before we put the sheets on it. Then we gathered up the hay and weeds cut beforehand and covered the poles with it. I doubt if even Robinson Crusoe made a more strange appearance than we did; but everybody was happy. . . . I kept the boys pretty busy much of the time. The hay had to be hauled, and three of the boys went at it, changing about with the plowing, hauling hay, and peeling logs for the house. Of course, I gave them plenty of time to play, too.

By the tenth of October, we had put up twenty-five tons of hay for four mules and oxen, had our logs all peeled, and were ready to put up our log shanty, 14' by 33', with dirt roof on it. Father Jerome sent us a carpenter to quicken the job by putting in the doors and windows. The last of October, we were just about to finish and wanted to move in after All Saints day, when all of a sudden it turned cold and all hands went to work to move everything into our newly built home. Our kitchen stove was put up beforehand. . . . We soon had a fire, and all felt comfortable. We had our house plastered with mud mixed with hay. It was really warm. One end of our house served as dormitory, and the other as kitchen, dining room, and play room. Everybody felt at home; no runaways. These were the most sensible Indian boys with whom I had ever dealt.

You must not think we did not pray. No! Not knowing any Indian prayers, I taught the boys the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Apostles' Creed; we said them for morning and night prayers, and an Our Father before and after meals. On Sundays, we went sixteen miles to Fort Yates to Mass; and sometimes we had Mass during the week.

It was most likely the diversified and exciting work of construction that held the roving disposition of Brother Giles's crew in check.

In 1882, one of the boys, ten years old, baptized after being instructed for half a year, ran away secretly from the farm school. Brother January went four miles to the boy's home to bring him back.

Brother January found the boy with his mother, a woman about

56 years old. When the boy saw that the Brother had come to take him back to school, he ran out of the house and quickly hid in a hole in the ground. The Brother asked the mother where the boy was. She indicated the place. He went there and had the boy come out of the hole; whereupon the lad ran screaming toward the house.

At that the mother came out, took position between the boy and Brother January and, facing the Brother at a distance of three feet and saying nothing, suddenly distorted her face like a demon, and flashed a butcher knife as high as she could to thrust it into his heart. "Certainly, I was frightened," the Brother writes in his memoirs, "but I calmly remained standing and made no move of self-defense. What kept her from the murderous deed, I do not know. Slowly her arm sank, and then I said to her: 'I do not want your boy; but wait, God will punish you.'"

Four weeks later the mother came and lamented before Sister Placida that her boy was sick. Upon being reminded by the Sister of her murderous conduct, the woman said she was very sorry.

Another four weeks later the mother returned, bringing the corpse of her boy for burial in the cemetery at the agency. The Agent, who had heard of the conduct of the woman said to the Brother: "Brother, you need only say the word and I will punish the woman by imprisoning her." "No," answered the Brother, "this woman still is a savage and does not know better."

It was in 1879 that the Sisters and the girls moved out into this primitive farm school, after special buildings had been provided for them. The Sisters took care of the girls; Father Jerome and several Brothers had charge of the boys.

The management of the farm school was family-like: apart from the ordinary school work, the boys did the heavier work, the girls helped the Sisters in all the feminine domestic and barnyard work; every week the children were assigned new tasks so that each boy and each girl became accustomed to do all the work on a farm.

Such was the proficiency of these youngsters that in his report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, on September 1, 1880, the Agent could write: "In the spring of 1880, eight of these boys were

detailed, at the special request of the Indians, to give instructions to such Indians as were farming claims, in the proper method of plowing their land and in planting their grain, as well as explaining to them the working of mowing machines and the handling of scythes."⁴⁹ And of the boarding school at the agency, which had been opened less than three years ago, he reported: "Of the boys' boarding school we can be justly proud. . . . The greater portion of them have been in the school less than two years, and most of them can now read and write with the greatest facility. . . . We doubt if there is any number of scholars of the same age in any common school in the country who either learn with the same facility or equal them in penmanship. . . . The morals and social behavior of these scholars are a credit to themselves and to their teacher, Rev. Jerome Hunt, whose efforts in their behalf have been untiring, and whom they venerate both as a father and a higher being."⁵⁰

Father Jerome was the first superintendent and manager of the farm school, and another Father meanwhile presided at Standing Rock. Father Chrysostom had been sent to Bismarck to take care of the congregation.

Though life at St. Benedict's ordinarily flowed along very calmly, it was not devoid of exciting experiences. In an interview in 1942, Brother Philip, at that time still hale and hearty, narrated to the author:

It was on Easter Monday (March 29, 1880) that Father Jerome told me to hitch up the little spring wagon. We were to drive up to the agency on business, which included getting food and clothing, rationed by the Government Agent.

Our trip to the agency was pleasant. It was a sunny day, and spring had got the best even of a grim Dakota winter, though it was cold enough for Father Jerome to put on his fur overcoat.

About seven and a half miles from Standing Rock we came to Four Mile Creek. The creek was fed by a strong

⁴⁹ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, etc., 1880, p. 57.

⁵⁰ *L. c.*, 1879, p. 49.

spring further up in the hills. This spring flowed winter and summer, so that the creek was never completely dry. This flow of water, together with that of occasional rains and spring thaws, had cut a channel about fourteen feet deep and thirty feet wide. The water was ordinarily not deep, and the only difficulty in crossing was to get down on the near side and up on the far side of the banks. These were negotiated by a narrow road of a sort, cut slantingly along each side of the banks. But in winter some of the water from the spring froze as it flowed over the ice, thus increasing the bulk of ice so that it just about filled the channel; the rest flowed off underneath the ice.

But as soon as the weather got warmer, much of the water flowed off over the ice, in which the current of the warmer spring water soon cut a shallow channel about the middle of the creek. We drove with ease straight across the frozen creek.

We had a pleasant visit at the agency, where we took care of our business, especially of loading the small wagon with provisions of food and clothing.

During the night following, it rained heavily. For that reason we decided to start back to our mission school at a convenient hour on the following day, before the force of the rain water coming from the western hills would break the ice in the creek and fill the channel with water. We were on our way at about ten o'clock.

Arriving at Four Mile Creek, we saw that there was a good deal of water rushing in a wide stream through the middle of the channel, but a strip of solid ice was still visible along the near and far bank; even these two strips were covered by the water, though not deeply. Father Jerome, who was of the opinion that there was still a bridge of ice, which, he thought, had merely sunk somewhat in the middle of the creek under the impact of the flood waters, told me that as soon as the mules got to the edge of the water I should give them the whip to make them cross quickly. He himself went back to the provisions in the wagon box. I, of course, stayed on the driver's seat. I drove the mules down the very short piece of sloping road to the ice, then gave them the whip. They started forward with a bound

and in the next moment disappeared in the whirling waters, pulling the wagon after them. The force of the rushing rain water had cut clear through the thick ice, leaving only the deceptive strip on each side.

Since one of the front wheels went over the submerged edge of the ice before the other, that side of the wagon went down first, throwing Father Jerome and all our provisions into the icy stream. I, too, was thrown clear of the wagon, and I found myself struggling in the water, yet holding on to the lines. That was lucky for me.

After a moment the mules emerged from the deep and pawed their way straight up the very steep opposite bank, pulling the wagon and me after them. To the present day I cannot understand how the mules could climb up that steep and slippery bank. Nor did the mules stop to see how they had done it. Up on the bank the lines slipped from my hands as the still frightened animals raced off with the wagon, though the impact of the drop into the deep had lifted the wagon box and had crashed the bottom of it over one of the back wheels, which then projected through the bottom of the wagon bed.

Upon picking myself up, my first thought was of Father Jerome. I saw him struggling in the water, but near the other side of the creek. He eventually succeeded in catching hold of the ledge of ice near that bank, but on account of the slickness of the ice and the weight of the cumbersome fur coat he could not pull himself up on the ledge. I called to ask if I could be of any help, but he told me to look after the team. He then worked himself carefully downstream to where he saw a clump of brushwood overhanging the bank. There he managed to lift himself out of the water.

Much farther down that side of the creek there were several cabins occupied by Indians. He told me that he would go there to dry his clothing and then return to the agency; I should try to catch the mules and then drive on to the mission.

My two mules meanwhile were dashing across the country with the crippled wagon jolting after them. Hindered by my wet clothing, I took up the unequal race. But when the mules had run about two miles and reached the out-

skirts of some woods, they suddenly veered about and ran toward me. Thoroughly exhausted and still frightened, they stopped just in front of me.

I examined the harness and found it still intact, lifted the wagon bed back into place, and returned to the mission—minus the provisions and Father Jerome.

At this point in his narrative I remarked to Brother Philip that it was very good of those two mules to turn back and look for their lost Brother. Laughing, Brother Philip continued:

Well, you see, the pagan Indians used those woods as a burial place—not by digging graves, but, as was their custom, by tying the corpses, wrapped in blankets or hides, into the lower forks formed by limbs and trunks of trees or on scaffolding constructed with saplings—and skeletons were dangling all around from trees and were even lying here and there on the ground. When the mules saw those skeletons, they were very glad to come back to me.

On September 8, 1878, Abbot Martin left Standing Rock to pay a second visit to Spotted Tail and Red Cloud in their camps. They and their headmen were most cordial toward him. They were delighted at his promise to establish in spring a school for their children. Both spoke of the fact that Episcopalians missionaries, recommended to them by the Government, had come among them; but the Indians wanted only Catholic priests.

Abbot Martin found both Chiefs very progressive and desirous of taking to farming and stock raising if only the Government would send them what it had promised for that purpose.

When the Abbot arrived at Red Cloud's camp of 500 tents or lodges, he was at once invited to be the guest of the Chief. "I have seldom seen a family more happy and innocent," the Abbot wrote to Bishop O'Connor. "In the course of the evening the other Chiefs came to pay me their respects and to tell me how glad they were to see that I would not abandon them next spring."

At that time Abbot Martin had a sad duty to perform. Father Brouillet, who had come West to inspect the missions, intended also to recall the two young seculars who had been entrusted with the care

of Spotted Tail's and Red Cloud's camps. There were serious charges—in particular against the Reverend A. H. Frederick. Having arrived at Standing Rock, Father Brouillet asked Abbot Martin to take care of the matter.⁵¹ In the Abbot's opinion, Frederick ought never again be admitted to clerical ministry.⁵²

On October 18, Abbot Martin was back in St. Meinrad. Before leaving the missions, he had requested a good Catholic friend of his, Augustus C. Paul, First Lieutenant, Third Cavalry, at Fort Sidney, Nebraska, to keep him informed of the state of affairs. On March 8, 1879, Lieutenant Paul wrote to the Abbot:

I had a conversation with Dr. McGillycuddy, the Agent at Pine Ridge, on the religious subject. He told me that he was forbidden by the Indian Department to allow any denomination on the Agency except permission was granted by them. . . . So far as he was concerned, he thought all denominations should be allowed on the Agency and let the best one win. He says, in his experience, the *Catholics* have done by far the most good.

On March 14, Abbot Martin, enclosing Lieutenant Paul's letter with his own to Bishop O'Connor, commented: "We have now a positive proof that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs intends to carry out the Grant policy in its most odious interpretation. As Congress is to assemble again, we might yet succeed to have the bill of liberty of the Indians passed this spring and prevent all further trouble. Your authority and influence can and, I think, will accomplish it."⁵³ All to no avail.

Abbot Martin had written to a friend that the Government was unfavorably disposed toward Catholic mission work on those two agencies. When Spotted Tail, firebrand that he was, heard of the unfavorable attitude of the Government, he held a council with his

⁵¹ Catholic Indian Mission Bureau (Brouillet to R. Hunter, Standing Rock, Sept. 5, 1878; Brouillet to Ewing); Omaha diocesan archives (Abbot Martin to Bishop O'Connor, Sept. 4, 1878).

⁵² Conception Abbey archives (Abbot Martin to Prior Frowin, Sept. 30, 1878; Oct. 19, 1878).

⁵³ Omaha diocesan archives.

headmen, and they all went to Henry C. Bulis, temporarily acting as Agent for special Agent Pollock, and had him write for them a long letter and a petition to Washington. On March 17, the headmen, thirty of them, signed the petition for a Catholic mission. Bulis approved of it and promised to send it to the Secretary of the Interior.⁵⁴

The Abbot felt that St. Meinrad was too far distant for efficient handling of the mission problems. And so, after Easter, he sent Father Meinrad McCarthy, O.S.B., to Bishop O'Connor. Father Meinrad was to receive instructions from the Bishop with regard to taking up missionary work on the Pine Ridge Agency.⁵⁵

After receiving his instructions from the Bishop, Father Meinrad arrived at the agency on April 30. Colonel O'Beirne, a devout Catholic and acting agent during McGillicuddy's temporary absence, received him very kindly. As was his duty, the acting agent notified Commissioner Hayt, at Washington, of the arrival of the Catholic missionary. Abbot Martin claimed that the Episcopalian minister, under instruction of his Bishop, Hare, had sent a telegram to the Secretary of the Interior, Schurz.⁵⁶ Colonel O'Beirne was of the opinion that the orders from Washington would be to compel the priest to leave the agency. "If so," Father Meinrad wrote on May 5 in his letter to the Bishop, "I will only go as far as I am driven." The colonel himself gave Father Meinrad \$20 toward his support. As a lodging, Chief Red Cloud offered him the new house that the Government was building for the Chief. Father Meinrad declined the offer, to avoid giving the Government any pretense for action against the Chief. Father Meinrad had heard of a rumor that an effort was being made to remove Red Cloud from his chieftaincy and to put another in his place. He also observed that the Mexicans and the Canadians in and around the agency, though Catholic, appeared to

⁵⁴ Omaha diocesan archives, (Abbot Martin to Bishop O'Connor, March 31, 1879). Cf. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*... 1879 p. 41; Abbot Martin's letter erroneously has "Gov. Bulis."

⁵⁵ Abbot Martin to Bishop O'Connor, Good Friday, [April 11,] 1879.

⁵⁶ See footnote 85 of this chapter.

take no interest in their religion. One of them refused to rent him a room because "he is afraid to displease the Government."

On May 13, O'Beirne communicated to Father Meinrad this telegram from E. H. Hayt, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated May 10: "Abbot Martin has no authority to send anyone to Pine Ridge. The intruder must be sent back to Sidney."

Father Meinrad sent the two communications to Bishop O'Connor on May 14.

I answered that I cannot and will not leave until I am forced to do so. I am momentarily expecting to be put off [the reservation].

For the last week I have been living in a tent near Red Cloud, and by his advice, when I am forced to leave here, I will go about 9 miles from the Agency and about 2 miles outside the reservation into Nebraska, and there I will await further orders from you or from Father Abbot. Red Cloud says that the Indians assembled in council will appeal to the Great Father [the President]—they are disgusted at the manner in which their affairs are managed by government officials and say that the men they want and who would be useful to them they cannot have. . . . I hope for the best and am perfectly willing to make every sacrifice necessary to carry out your plan and Father Abbot's.⁵⁷

Afterwards, Colonel O'Beirne informed Father Meinrad that, as he had no power to carry out the instructions received from Washington, he could take no action in regard to expelling him but would write to Washington for further instructions.⁵⁸

A short while later the agent, McGillicuddy, returned from Washington and handed this formal communication to Father Meinrad:

In accordance with verbal instructions from the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to myself, and telegram to Special U. S. Indian Agent O'Beirne under date of

⁵⁷ Omaha diocesan archives.

⁵⁸ Fr. Meinrad to the Bishop, May 19, 1879.

May 10, 1879, I have the honor to inform you that your presence on this Indian Reservation cannot be allowed ecclesiastically or otherwise.

Very Respectfully
V. T. McGillicuddy
U. S. Indian Agent

The note was obviously a pointed one. Father Meinrad yielded to the force threatened, but not before entering his protest.⁵⁹

McGillicuddy told him that a great deal of trouble could arise if he would not leave quietly because he could get nobody "to drive" him off the reservation. And so, with Mass-kit strapped to his back, Father Meinrad left the agency on May 17, lest he be blamed for any disturbance started by the Indians, who were dissatisfied over the way the Government officials were handling their affairs.

Chief Red Cloud had advised him to stay at a place two miles beyond the reservation. Here a canvas tent, 14 feet by 16, was both chapel and residence—the sanctuary was 10 feet by 14; he called the place—and dated his letters from—"St. Meinrad's Cell."

Red Cloud, who came to visit him there on the next day, told him that the Indians were going to hold a council on May 20, and

⁵⁹ The laws under which the Indian Commissioner and the Agent were acting were those passed on June 12, 1858, c. 155, s. 2, v. 11, p. 332. *Revised Statutes of the U.S. Passed at the First Session of the Forty-third Congress, 1873-74* (Washington, 1875; p. 376). Section 2149 reads: "The Commissioner of Indian Affairs is authorized and required, with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, to remove from any tribal reservation any person being therein without authority of law or whose presence within the limits of the reservation may in the judgment of the Commissioner, be detrimental to the peace and welfare of the Indians, and may employ for the purpose such force as may be necessary to enable the Agent to effect the removal of such person." Cf. Sections 2140 and 2139 banning liquor from the reservations.—Section 2134 made a transgressor liable to a fine of \$1,000 for entering a reservation without a passport.—These laws had been laudably enacted for the protection of the Indians and their property against greedy exploiters of the Indians. The sinister element entered in when these laws were invoked against Catholic missionaries doing purely missionary work, or even against their keeping Mass wine.

were going to petition the President to settle the religious question to their satisfaction.⁶⁰

At the council the Chiefs were unanimous in demanding that they must have priests and nuns to teach them and their children.

Red Cloud went to the agent, told him that all the Chiefs of his tribe and every man, woman, and child of his nation desired to have priests and nuns; that they had frequently expressed this... and that they could not understand why, when a priest came, he was ordered off; they insisted he should not be suffered to return to his home again, but should be called again to the agency and that the Agent must immediately inform the great-father of this their desire, etc. The Agent replied that he had ordered me off by the great-father's request—but that he would write immediately and as soon as the great-father received his letter he would recall me. He told Red Cloud that his own mother was a most devout Catholic and that although he himself belongs to no denomination, yet he would like to see the Catholics at the agency.⁶¹

McGillycuddy at once sent copies of the speeches made at the council to the President. But there seemed to be no reaction from Washington except that, on August 9, Father Meinrad wrote the Bishop that he had heard that the Secretary of the Interior, Carl Schurz, and the Episcopalian Bishop Hare were to visit the agency in September. Writing again to Bishop O'Connor, on September 3, Father Meinrad quoted this passage from a letter that Abbot Martin had sent him on August 11:

From what I heard when in Washington, 26-28 July, we need not expect that President Hayes will change the policy of President Grant with regard to the Indians nor heed any petitions they will address to him. Our only hope is that Congress in the next session will by a special bill grant religious liberty to the Aborigines remaining in the land of the brave and the home of the free.⁶²

⁶⁰ Omaha diocesan archives (Fr. Meinrad to Bishop O'Connor, May 19, 1879).

⁶¹ *Ibid.* (Fr. Meinrad to Bishop O'Connor, May 24, 1879).

⁶² *Ibid.* (Fr. Meinrad to Bishop O'Connor, Sept. 3, 1879).

Father Meinrad wrote that, informed that Schurz had actually come to the agency, he had called on him, but had received a negative answer. "He says that, for the present, he cannot possibly tolerate our presence on the reservation and that he can pay no heed to the Indian petition. He claims that they were put up to this—that they do not know what they are asking for, and that we are too grasping—and that no matter what we get, we are not satisfied. Among other things, I told the Secretary that if in our present position I received a sick call, I would certainly answer it. He was not willing that I should do even that. He thinks the time has not yet come for the poor Indians to have religious liberty."

But shortly thereafter an unlooked-for break came in Grant's peace policy. Toward the end of that same year, the Presbyterians sent a native teacher, the Reverend Daniel Renville, to establish a mission in the Catholic reservation of Devils Lake. In compliance with the "peace policy" the Catholic Agent ordered him off the reservation, and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs upheld the action of the Agent. Thereupon the Protestant American Board of Foreign Missions corralled nine denominations to send petitions to Carl Schurz on February 7, 1881, asking that Grant's peace policy be revoked. Since just at that time Schurz quit President Hayes's cabinet, C. Lunn, now Secretary of the Department, by letter of February 17 granted their petition; he ruled that henceforth any denomination might engage in mission work at will in the various reservations "except where the presence of rival religious organizations would manifestly be perilous to peace and good order."⁶³ To this ruling the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in 1883, gave a wide interpretation and allowed all religious denominations to do missionary work on any Indian Reservations, "provided they do not interfere with the conduct of agency matters."⁶⁴

⁶³ The pertinent correspondence is in the National Archives, Department of the Interior, 19983-13(816).

⁶⁴ Quoted from Wm. H. Ketcham, *Our Catholic Indian Missions*, a paper read before The Catholic Indian Mission Congress, Chicago, November 16, 1908, p. 6; cf. Letter of the Secretary of the Interior, *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners*, 1882, p. 53.

Abbot Martin, who by that time had been made Vicar Apostolic, could only welcome this development in Indian mission work. He now was free to establish missions on reservations from which he had hitherto been barred; he established Holy Rosary Mission on Pine Ridge agency and St. Francis Mission on the Rosebud agency—for which two missions he obtained the German Jesuits from Buffalo, New York, on January 1, 1886—and the Immaculate Conception Mission at Stephan, which he put in charge of Father Pius Boehm, O.S.B., of St. Meinrad's Abbey, on January 21, 1887. This same freedom of religion made it possible for Father Sylvester Eisenman, O.S.B., in 1921, to take up and develop St. Paul Mission, at Marty—the wonder of the prairie—of which more will be said later. Each of these mission centers is now caring for a number of mission stations. This is another proof that, when God builds His Church, the devil has to be a hod carrier.

By letter of October 21, 1877, Brouillet, with the consent of Bishop Seidenbusch, O.S.B., to whose vicariate Devils Lake belonged, requested Abbot Martin to take charge also of the mission on the Devils Lake Agency, in the northern part of the Dakota Territory; he should send a Father and a Brother. The whole reservation was made up of the Sisseton, Wahpeton, and Cut-head bands of Sioux, numbering a total of 1,105 souls. The first Agent of the reservation was Major Forbes, who, together with his family, was an exemplary Catholic. It was he who, on November 2, 1874, succeeded in bringing the Sisters of Charity (the Grey Nuns) from Montreal, Canada, to start a school. The Reverend Bonin came with them as their Chaplain.

At Devils Lake the Sisters found nature in the raw. One day, not long after their arrival, they heard screams outside their dwelling. Looking out, they saw an Indian woman, with blood streaming down her face, running toward their house. Another woman was after her, belaboring her with a hatchet. The two women were rival wives of the same man. The Sisters helped the bleeding woman into the house and dressed her wounds. That done, one of the Sisters went to her room to wash the blood off her hands, but she found the door

bolted from within. When the door was finally opened, there stood the assailant with the bloody hatchet still in her hands; while the Sisters had been intent upon dressing the wounds of the other woman, this one had sneaked into the Sister's room. The woman assured the Sisters that she would not hurt them. She asked them to let her stay till dark. She would then take to the woods, because if the relatives of the other woman would find her, they would kill her.

Getting the school started was quite a problem; at first the little redskins saw no sense in sitting quietly in a closed room when the open countryside was so inviting.

In June, 1878, Abbot Martin accompanied Father Claude Ebner, O.S.B., and Brother John Apke, O.S.B., to the new mission that he had taken on. The June 1 entry of the annals of the Grey Nuns reveals the spiritual privation they were enduring at that time: "We anxiously await the arrival of the Benedictine Fathers. It is now fifteen days since Father Bonin left us for St. Joseph's of Pembina and we find [it] to be a great sacrifice to be deprived so long of the holy Mass." Abbot Martin and his two companions arrived at the mission on June 13.⁶⁵

Father Claude's pastoral activity extended fully 100 miles north of Devils Lake, that is, beyond the present St. John. The inscription over the entrance to the St. Claude Historical State Park indirectly pays tribute to Father Claude's missionary activity up in that country. The inscription on the monument, a granite boulder, in the "park" reads as follows: "The Mission St. Claude Founded May 3, 1882, by Pere J. Malo." But the inscription is in accordance with fact only in the sense that Father Malo built the first (log cabin) church at that place. However, in the Book of Baptisms at St. Michael's (to which the original mission at Fort Totten had been moved), Father Claude entered ten baptisms conferred by him, from October 28, 1880, to June 26, 1881, at St. Claude Mission. In connection with those baptisms there occurred also the name Brien (Bryen). One Gregory Brien, 83 years of age in 1940, living up in the Turtle Moun-

⁶⁵"Annals of the Mission of Notre Dame of Seven Dolors."

tains, said when interviewed by the author: "Father Claude was the first priest to come to us. He stayed in our house [the house of Antoine Brien] six days at a time." It was in that house that Father Claude used to conduct divine service. "Father Malo came later. When the town of St. John grew up [about three miles southeast of St. Claude mission], the Catholics built the church there, tearing down the old log church."

Father Claude was aware that several priests sent to Dakota had not responded successfully under the stress of mission life. He felt that full harmony in private and public activity would be impaired in a mission unit made up of secular and religious priests. Father Claude accordingly asked to be relieved of his position when a secular priest was appointed his assistant. He then received orders to return to Standing Rock. In the autumn of 1882, Father Jerome and Brother Giles took over at Devils Lake.

It was in this new field that Father Jerome attained the eminence as an Indian missionary for which he became known. He got the happy idea of having his Indians take an active part in the conservation and the spread of the faith—his plan was, in other words, a form of Catholic Action. On March 19, 1884, he started the St. Joseph Society for the men and the St. Mary Society for the women. Each held its meeting on Sunday at the mission. For each meeting one member was appointed to address his society on some religious topic; whereupon they powwowed about it, with Father Jerome dividing his attention between the two meetings.

Of course, the one to address the meeting had to be well informed on the topic and had to be ready to answer questions. The Sioux loves to speak in public and, in general, he is a good speaker. All that brought about a homemade penetration and application of religious truths. Ignatius Court, one of the earlier members of the society, told the author that in case they knew of one who was negligent in his religious life, they would in a diplomatic way induce him to attend a meeting—just as a friendly visitor. Taking advantage of his natural love to address an assembly, they would in the course of the meeting ask him to speak to them at the next meeting on some

easy topic. During the week they were glad to hear how concerned he was about whether his children had learned their catechism and their Bible History well. To make a good appearance at the next meeting, he of course would make a great effort to learn in this manner some catechism and Bible History himself.

Father Jerome had personal experience with the difficulties at the Standing Rock mission, especially with those encountered in evoking a personal religious interest on the part of the adults. Nor were the Benedictines from Conception Abbey, Missouri, Fathers Martin Kenel and Bede Marty, more successful at the outset. Fathers Martin and Bede had, in 1884, taken over the mission and St. Benedict's farm school (thereafter called the Kenel School).

Father Jerome called the attention of Father Martin and Father Bede to the success he was having with his Societies, whereupon arrangement was made for two of his catechists from the Joseph Society to make the long trip from Devils Lake to Standing Rock. At several meetings the Standing Rock Indians were astonished at the ease with which their brethren from the North spoke on religious and kindred topics. The men from the Devils Lake mission told them about their societies and how they worked; and so, on Easter Sunday, 1888, the St. Joseph Society and the St. Mary Society were formally organized at Standing Rock. From then on, that mission, too, developed a more active religious life.

A similar procedure was followed in the Jesuit missions at Rosebud and Pine Ridge. Father Jerome also went in person to instruct the Jesuits in the rudiments of the Sioux language.

A Canadian Indian mission, too, hearing of the success of these societies, introduced them. In this manner Father Jerome and his Sioux Indians anticipated by nearly sixty years the Catechetical Societies and Discussion Clubs that the clergy of the United States were to organize about 1940.

The story of the beginning of the mission at the Devils Lake Agency opened with the scene of one woman hacking another. Another drama, however, one that partly preceded, partly followed the founding of this mission, reveals noble traits in the Sioux.

In May, 1860, a Sioux Indian, Nebraska by name, from Devils Lake, with his two children, a boy of five and a girl of six, having traversed the trail of about 150 miles, knocked at the door of the orphanage which the Grey Nuns were conducting at St. Boniface, Manitoba, and said: "I have come to bring my children to the Women of Prayer, so that they will be brought up like the Whites and pray." From a Canadian trader he had heard of the "Women of Prayer" and had come all this distance to bring his children to them. Before leaving, he told the Sisters that he himself would return to be baptized.

The girl, "graceful and affectionate, endeared herself to the Sisters and the children." Archbishop Tasche placed her little brother with the orphan boys at the Jesuit College. On May 27, after Vespers, the Archbishop baptized both in the presence of a large congregation; the girl was named Mary Adele.

On the following day the Sister Assistant wanted to take Mary Adele with her to Montreal, most probably as traveling companion. However, the parents, who had been notified of Adele's intended journey, waited for the two at Pembina and objected to the child's going farther. When the Sister explained the reason for the journey, the father relented, but the mother wept and refused her consent. At that the father was displeased with his wife and would by force have taken the child from her to give it to the Sister. But the Sister said, "No, the child must remain." Now shedding tears of gratitude, the mother said: "You understand a mother's heart. I love you, and because my child prays like you, I promise to bring her back soon to the country of the Red River, where she will always stay with you."

One day in June the mother came back with little Adele. The Sisters were surprised to see so much strength of character and noble sentiments in a pagan woman. "I promised," she said, "and had to keep my word, although it is hard for me to be separated from her."

She was back again on October 20, carrying a tiny girl whom she wanted to be baptized. This child was christened Mary Josephine.

A few days later the mother, with her papoose on her back, again set out on the long trail to Devils Lake. Before leaving, she told the Sisters that she would come back with her husband to be instructed in the true religion, so that they, too, might be baptized. But, before they could carry out their holy resolution, her husband was killed by the hostile Mandans in the fall of 1862; he died with at least the desire to be baptized.

As soon as peace had come again to her country, the widow Nebraska in May, 1863, took to the trail a fourth time to return to the "Women of Prayer," bringing with her little Josephine and a baby girl twenty months old.

The Sisters were edified at the confidence of the poor woman and received her with affection. Her youngest child, too, was baptized; she received the name Catharine. Mother and infant were allowed to stay at the Sisters' convent and school at St. Norbert, where, in due time, the mother was baptized.

Josephine was a clever child and received a good education at the Sisters' boarding school in St. Boniface, where she learned to read and write French and English perfectly. For some time she rendered good service to the house by needlework.

In 1885 she asked to be received into the community. After some time she was admitted into the Novitiate.

On May 30, 1887, Josephine made her profession as "Sister Nebraska," in the Cathedral at St. Boniface before a large congregation. At the Communion of the Mass she approached the Holy Table in the company of her mother.

"A Mohegan Chief, accompanied by his aide-de-camp, was present. 'What has happened today,' he said, 'is a glory for us, a proof that the Indian is not despised, and that in religion all are equal. I am happy now and I understand what religion can do.'"

After Mass, Sister Nebraska's mother, in appreciation of her daughter's spiritual espousal to our Lord, said pleasantly: "I am a grand lady now; Jesus Christ is my Son-in-law."⁶⁶

⁶⁶ From the manuscript "Annals of the Sisters of Charity (The Grey Nuns)," St. Boniface, Manitoba.

After he had provided as best he could for the Spotted Tail and Red Cloud camps and, in the North, at Devils Lake, for the Fort Totten mission, Abbot Martin hurried back to St. Meinrad, where he arrived on October 18, 1878.

The hard beginnings of those missions may strike one as high adventure; but it took stout hearts and a holy zeal to bear up under conditions that at times were appalling. Upon his return to the Abbey Abbot Martin once remarked to the Fathers that formerly he had thought that the saying about one's hair standing on end was merely a figure of speech; he had now experienced that it could be true literally.

He had come by way of Omaha, where he conferred with Bishop O'Connor. The Bishop suggested that during the winter he go East to solicit funds. Abbot Martin had neither taste nor talent for such a task, as he informed Father Brouillet. To Bishop O'Connor he expressed the fear that he was absent too much from his monastery and that it might be easier for a Bishop to absent himself for a longer time from his well-regulated Diocese than for an Abbot to leave his monastery. Nevertheless, after the first few days of January, 1879, he also undertook this task in behalf of the Indian missions.

He was back again at the Abbey on March 19, the feast of St. Joseph. "I feel," he wrote to Prior Frowin, "as though I never again wanted to leave it. . . . I have not yet formed a definite resolution as to what is to be done in Dakota because everywhere the task is to make something—something good at that—out of nothing. That requires a creative power, that is, a faith to move mountains. . . . If I can stay where I am and the conversion of the Indians will be adopted as the work of the Order [instead of that of St. Meinrad alone], then my wish is fulfilled. God will provide."⁶⁷

His stay at St Meinrad was short. News of the plight of the Sioux in the British Possessions made him fear that they could not stand it there another winter, "and," he wrote to Bishop O'Connor,

⁶⁷ Conception Abbey archives (Martin to Frowin, March 27, 1879).

"I must first save their lives if I shall save their souls."⁶⁸ In a letter of May 2 to the same Bishop he had given an additional motive: "The other camps and tribes will never be quiet as long as these hostiles remain in the North by themselves."

The Abbot left for Ottawa on July 20 to negotiate with the Canadian Government. There he received a very favorable assurance of co-operation. On July 23 he went to Washington to see under what terms Sitting Bull might return. In the capital, too, he found a willingness to have the costly Indian conflict settled in a peaceful manner. He had a long and very friendly conversation with President Hayes and was assured by him that the resolutions of the Government would in due time be handed him at Bismarck.⁶⁹

Abbot Martin has left no record of what those resolutions were; but we may infer them from what he wrote to Bishop O'Connor: "I shall not invite them [the hostile Indians] to come back, but only explain their situation and assure them that they will be safe and well treated, that is, no worse than those who have always remained with us."⁷⁰ An invitation might have been an inducement for Sitting Bull to lay down conditions—a thing the Government wanted to avoid.

Well satisfied with the result of his conversations at Washington, Abbot Martin without delay started on his journey, but by way of St. Meinrad.

Meanwhile acts of great importance were decided upon at the Holy See. As early as October 6, 1878, Bishop O'Connor of Omaha had informed Abbot Wimmer confidentially: "Dakota is to be erected into a new vicariate immediately. At my suggestion he [Abbot Martin] was put first on the list sent to Rome."⁷¹

Since the beginning of the year 1879, Abbot Martin heard that his name had been sent to Rome for appointment as Vicar Apostolic

⁶⁸ June 8, 1879.

⁶⁹ St. M. Ll. X, p. 1189 (Fr. Eberhard Stadler, O.S.B., to Abbot Basil, Aug. 7, 1879. Fr. Eberhard had this information from Abbot Martin immediately after the latter's return from Washington).

⁷⁰ August 22, 1879.

⁷¹ St. Vincent Archabbey archives (Bishop O'Connor to Abbot Wimmer, O.S.B., Oct. 6, 1878).

of the Vicariate to be established in the Dakota Territory; the information filled him "with consternation and worry."⁷² What he feared became a reality when, on August 5, the bull was published that he was appointed Bishop of Tiberias and, on August 12, that he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of the newly erected Vicariate of the Dakota Territory.

The news of these appointments had been carried by the newspapers by the end of July and so had reached St. Meinrad. Father Eberhard Stadler, O.S.B., pastor at Ferdinand, was commissioned to be on guard so that the Abbot would not slip into the Abbey unobserved, as was his custom. Father Eberhard planned to post a lookout at every likely approach to St. Meinrad. But before he could carry out this plan, he had to go on a distant sick call on August 1, a very hot day. He returned only at 7:30 in the evening, "quite tired and disgruntled," as he narrates. He saw a rickety spring wagon in the yard and exclaimed: "What sort of ragpicker is here again?" "It's just I," answered a voice. It was the Abbot; he had "in forced marches come from Washington to Jasper," where he had found the wagon.

The Abbot's casual remark that he was going on to St. Meinrad in the morning put Father Eberhard in a predicament. Telephones had not yet reached that part of the country. And so he told the Abbot that he himself was going to St. Meinrad the next day; he would take him there becomingly, but he could not leave until nine o'clock. After the Abbot had retired to his room, Father Eberhard dispatched a courier to the Abbey, six miles south, and during the night had his new two-horse buggy beautifully adorned.

They left Ferdinand at nine o'clock sharp. On the way the Abbot inquired: "Why this decoration?" Father Eberhard then told him that St. Meinrad had heard the news and that he would be given an episcopal reception. As though in confirmation of his word the cannons sent their salute over the rolling hills; the town band came out to meet them and, amidst the ringing of the bells, preceded them as they rode to the town and up to the Abbey.

⁷² Conception Abbey archives (Abbot Martin to Prior Frowin, Jan. 27, 1879).

The whole community had assembled in the vestibule, where Prior Fintan greeted him in a Latin speech. Thereupon all, singing the *Ave maris stella*, went to the chapel, where the Abbot gave benediction with the Blessed Sacrament. After that, they assembled for a little family feast in the recreation room, where the Abbot was conducted to "a magnificent throne of flowers and garlands" that had been prepared during the night and morning. The Abbot spoke about the special working of Divine Providence in his missionary undertakings and asked for unity and joint prayer.⁷³

On August 4, the Abbot again left for Dakota. At Devils Lake, where he arrived on August 13, he made use of a week's time to conduct the retreat for the Sisters. His instructions were greatly appreciated and, so they wrote in their annals, "the Sisters consider him a very holy man."

From that mission he left for Bismarck on August 20, where he took a boat up to Fort Benton, in the northwestern corner of Montana; there, according to arrangements, McLeod of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police had a conveyance ready to take him to Fort Walsh, Canada, and thence to the various Sioux camps.⁷⁴

Accompanied by Captain Colton, of the Mounted Police, the Abbot arrived at Sitting Bull's camp at Wood Mountain on Frenchman's Creek. All along the route he had noticed that where two years ago there were immense herds of buffalo now there were none. That was an indication that the Sioux now were nearing the end of their food resources and that, as Sitting Bull himself had pointed out on the Abbot's previous visit, it would be time to think about returning to the reservation. When Abbot Martin called Sitting Bull's attention to the fact, he spoke to a willing ear; but since the cold season already had set in, it was thought advisable not to break up camp before spring. As a sign of their willingness to devote themselves to peaceful pursuits in the future, the Indians would consent

⁷³ St. M. Ll. X, pp. 1189-1190 (Fr. Eberhard to Abbot Basil, Aug. 7, 1879); Conception Abbey archives (Fr. Bede Maler, O.S.B., to Prior Frowin, Aug. 10, 1879).

⁷⁴ Bismarck, Abbot Martin to Bishop O'Connor, Aug. 22, 1879.

to the condition of laying down their firearms and giving up their ponies.

With these assurances of Sitting Bull, Abbot Martin returned to the Dakota Territory; he arrived at Bismarck on November 5.⁷⁵

Even during that winter, and then throughout the year 1880, several bands crossed the boundary to surrender to the U. S. Army. The principal leader of these was Gall, to whom "Fish" Allison, the interpreter of a government commission to negotiate with Sitting Bull, had promised Sitting Bull's chieftaincy if he would desert him. Sitting Bull himself had, toward the end of 1880, crossed the boundary to surrender at Fort Buford, together with forty lodges; but when he noticed that a troop of soldiers were attempting to wedge in between him and the Canadian boundary, he suspected that they wanted to kill or capture him instead of accepting his surrender. And so he retraced his steps, slipped by them, and again crossed over to Canada.

It was only on July 19, 1881, that Sitting Bull and his bedraggled followers appeared at Fort Buford and surrendered. But, in violation of the promise made him by the Government, he and a number of his followers were not taken to the Standing Rock reservation but were kept as prisoners of war at Fort Randall, Nebraska. In his first annual message to the Senate and House of Representatives, dated December 6, 1881, President Chester A. Arthur stated with satisfaction: "The surrender of Sitting Bull and his forces upon the Canadian frontier has allayed apprehension."⁷⁶

Urging Bishop O'Connor to lend his prestige to some financial plan that he had suggested in behalf of the missions, Bishop Marty, as an encouraging example to O'Connor, referred to his own contribution to Sitting Bull's return, which had but recently taken place: "I hope it will in this matter be as it was with Sitting Bull's return: my own attempts seemed unavailing, but now my expectations are surpassed by the results."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Letter to Bishop O'Connor, Nov. 9, 1879; the *Amerika*, Dec. 29, 1890.

⁷⁶ *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*. (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897), X, 4625.

⁷⁷ Marty to O'Connor, Aug. 15, 1881.

The War Department of the United States and the Royal Northwest Mounted Police both claimed that they had brought about the return of Sitting Bull to the United States. "Fish" Allison, whom the Agent at Standing Rock had officially denounced as an unreliable and disreputable character, yet who through the influence of Captain Poland had been made military interpreter, wrote a book to tell how he had brought about the much-desired event. And Jean Louis Le Gare, a French-Canadian trader, claimed that the credit for it was due to him and brought suit for \$13,412 in the U. S. Court of Claims.⁷⁸

In contrast with the respectful manner in which the pagan Sitting Bull dealt with Abbot Martin, it is interesting to learn how a commission that had been sent by President Grant fared, about three months after the Abbot's first visit. A few days before the arrival of the commission, Sitting Bull told Major Walsh of the Mounted Police: "I have no confidence in the President or in any of his officials because they lower themselves to tricks which every Indian would be ashamed to use. The word of honor of these men often is given for no other purpose but to deceive. I hate the Americans because the spirit that controls them is evil; because they make treaties only to break them; because the government helps rascally officials to swindle the redmen; because they intend nothing else than by hunger, assault, and war to exterminate the Indians. And no friendly word on their part will assuage this hatred."⁷⁹

The Commission came under armed escort, of course, and with "Fish" Allison as interpreter. At a council, on September 17, 1877, Sitting Bull, having listened to them, said: "For 64 years you have treated us badly. What have we done that you should want us to stop?" Then, after speaking of his friendly relations with the half-breeds of Canada, he said: "You see me? Here I am. If you think I am a fool, you are a bigger fool than I am." Then he told

⁷⁸ Stanley Vestal, *Sitting Bull, Champion of the Sioux*, 1932.

⁷⁹ *Amerika (Wochen-Ausgabe)*, Oct. 31, 1877.

them plainly that he would not return; whereupon the commission left Fort Walsh and made its report to Washington.⁸⁰

Several years later, when a special Senate Committee was sent to investigate the signing of a treaty about which some Indians complained, one member of the Committee rapidly bunched together a number of questions, seemingly trying to confuse the Indians. Sitting Bull answered them: "Yes, that is all right. You have been conducting yourselves like men who have been drinking whiskey. . . . Previous to that time, when a Catholic priest came to see me, I told him all these things plainly. He told me the wishes of the Great Father, and I made promises which I meant to fulfill and did fulfill; and when I went over into the British Possessions, he followed me, and I told him everything that was in my heart, and sent him back to tell the Great Father what I told him.

"And General Terry sent me word afterwards to come in, because he had big promises to make me, and I sent him word that I would not throw my country away. . . . I do not consider that they [my people] should be treated like beasts, and that is why I have grown up with feelings like these."⁸¹

From all this it is apparent whose words weighed more with Sitting Bull in the formation of his resolutions.

So long as military glory or financial gain and publicity were in sight, the several parties mentioned claimed to have brought about Sitting Bull's surrender; but nobody concerned himself about him when, in violation of promises previously made to him, he was not returned a free man to his people on the Standing Rock reservation, but together with some faithful followers was kept at Fort Randall as a prisoner of war. No one was interested, with the exception of the good shepherd of the Sioux; but his motives were spiritual.

⁸⁰ Archives, Department of the Interior and of the War Department.

⁸¹ *Senate Ex. Document No. 70, 48th Congress, 1st Session, Part I*, pp. 34-68; *Part II*, pp. 1-2; *Reports of the Committees of the Senate for the first Session of the 48th Congress, 1883-1884. Vol. 2. Report 283* (...of the Select Committee of the Senate...to examine into the condition of the Sioux and Crow Indians.) *Standing Rock Agency*, Aug. 21, 1883, pp. 71, 72, 79.

J. B. Hasset, of White Swan, a friend of Bishop Marty, whom the latter had requested to keep him informed about the situation at Fort Randall, wrote to him, on June 4, 1882, that some of the young men with Sitting Bull were getting restless and discontented over the uncertainty in which they were kept and that "the military interpreter will not tell the commanding officer what they desire to say. . . . Some of the young men say . . . they would sooner die than remain much longer in such uncertainty. If something is not done soon, I am afraid there will be trouble. . . . The commanding officer is not aware of the feeling of those Indians. That clown of an interpreter being afraid to tell what they desire."

Marty forwarded this letter to Brouillet and asked for action in Washington.⁸² He himself hastened to Fort Randall on July 9 with words of comfort and hope. On the day following, before leaving the Fort, he baptized three sick Indian women, to their great joy.

Writing again to Brouillet, on July 13, Marty said: "I could not help feeling the deepest compassion for him [Sitting Bull] and his people. Cannot you do anything at all to obtain mercy and justice?" He knew from experience how a little spark can cause a devastating prairie fire. He added: "Please do or suggest something I can do for Sitting Bull. They want actions, not words."

On August 5, Marty wrote again to Brouillet that the Uncpapas and the Sihasapas had in spring asked for Sitting Bull's return. Marty wrote that he had now sent Hasset a petition to be signed by Sitting Bull and then to be forwarded to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, H. Price. Hasset faithfully fulfilled his mission of mercy and in a letter to Brouillet, in which he included a copy of the petition sent to the Commissioner, informed him of what had been done.

Brouillet answered Marty, on September 13, that the Commissioner was in favor of the transfer of Sitting Bull from Fort Randall to Standing Rock, but that he could do nothing until the War Department would release him. On December 30, Marty again wrote to Brouillet, urging him to obtain from the War Department

⁸² Archives, Catholic Indian Mission Bureau.

the release of Sitting Bull and his followers from their status as prisoners of war. At long last, on May 10, 1883, Sitting Bull and his followers were released at Fort Randall and arrived at the Standing Rock agency as free men.⁸³

Now Vicar Apostolic of the Dakota Territory, Abbot Martin had to prepare himself to direct his attention not only to the Indians of the two agencies entrusted to the Benedictines, but to all the other Indians of the territory and to all other people living within the Vicariate.

The previous four years had contributed much toward the development of the Abbot's character. His virtues as a priest and religious not only had held up under extraordinary hardships, they had grown stronger. He had become even more rigorous toward himself, but he had become more considerate of others.

After an unofficial survey of his future field of work, Abbot Martin returned to St. Meinrad. He arrived there on December 16, ready to settle his affairs at the Abbey and to receive episcopal consecration. The three Papal Bulls had been sent to Milwaukee, the archiepiscopal See of that ecclesiastical Province. Unable to locate Abbot Martin in the Northwest, the documents had been forwarded to St. Meinrad, where they had arrived by October 1. By the first document, dated August 8, 1879, Pope Leo XIII created him Titular Bishop of Tiberias; by the second, dated August 12, the Apostolic Vicariate of Dakota was created; and by the third, also of August 12, he was made the Vicar Apostolic of the new Vicariate.⁸⁴

In a formal document, dated December 18, Abbot Martin informed the monastic Chapter of his acceptance of the papal appointment and declared that he had to ask them to proceed to the election of a new Abbot. And he added: "I confidently call upon your charity, Reverend and most beloved confreres, to pardon all the mistakes I have made in my office and in your prayers always to be

⁸³ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1883, pp. 448-449. (Report of the Agent, Standing Rock Indian Agency, Aug. 15, 1883).

⁸⁴ Private copies in St. Meinrad Archabbey archives.

mindful of my poverty and my work.”⁸⁵ This official act notwithstanding, Martin Marty retained, until the middle of January, the direction of affairs of the monastery; some of the Fathers took exception to his saying, though in a good-natured manner, who would be Prior and who Subprior after Father Fintan’s election as Abbot; it was only after he had withdrawn from the management of affairs that the Chapter could put up a Capitular Vicar, Father Fintan, and an Oeconome, Father Benno.

Martin Marty was consecrated Bishop on Sexagesima Sunday, February 1, 1880. The Abbey chapel and the old frame church at St. Meinrad were too small, and so the parish church at Ferdinand was accorded the honor of being host to the solemnity. Bishop Francis Silas Chatard, the Diocesan Ordinary, was the Consecrator; he was assisted by Bishop Rupert Seidenbusch, O.S.B., Vicar Apostolic of Northern Minnesota, and Abbot Innocent Wolf, O.S.B., of St. Benedict Abbey, Atchison, Kansas. Abbot Boniface Wimmer, of St. Vincent Abbey, Beatty, Pennsylvania, preached. Father Isidor was the Master of Ceremonies.

Nearly all the members of the Abbey and of the seminary and many people from the neighboring towns traveled the rough and frozen roads to Ferdinand in the early morning. All these, together with the congregation of Ferdinand, were somehow packed into the church. Yet the whole service proceeded in an orderly and dignified manner.

The memorable function over, at nearly two o’clock, the guests were conveyed to the Abbey, where, at five o’clock, dinner was served. During dinner, Father Isidor gave an address in Latin, using as text our Lord’s words concerning St. Paul (Acts 9:15-16): “*Vas electionis est mihi iste, ut portet nomen meum coram gentibus et regibus et filiis Israel; ego enim ostendam illi, quanta oporteat eum pro nomine meo pati.*”

Ferdinand gave the new Bishop a crosier and a set of pontificals; Jasper gave him another set.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Private copy in St. Meinrad Archabbey archives.

⁸⁶ St. M. Ll. XI, pp. 1229-1230 (Isidor to Abbot Basil, Ash Wednesday,

The next morning, the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Bishop Marty ordained two Subdeacons and one Deacon in his beloved chapel on Monte Cassino.

On the following Sunday he pontificated, for the first time as a Bishop, in the frame church used by the parish. He ordained two Subdeacons of the Diocese to the diaconate and five Deacons to the priesthood. One of the new Deacons was for his Vicariate and the others were ordained for the Abbey.

Bishop Marty left for his Vicariate on February 9. He took along Father Henry Hug, O.S.B.; Father Felix Rumpf, O.S.B., was to follow after Easter. That gave him fourteen Benedictines, and he would gladly have taken fourteen more.

Father Henry was a very zealous Indian missionary in the noblest sense of the word. On the three-hour boat trip from Bismarck to Standing Rock, he approached several Indians to learn from them by heart quite a number of Indian words. At Standing Rock he at first had a talented Indian come to his room during the day, carefully to pronounce and explain word after word, all of which Father Henry wrote carefully on the two sides of a school slate. During the night, Father Henry would carefully commit the whole lesson to memory. It did not take long until he could converse and preach quite fluently in the Dakota language.

With a cloth tied about his head as a protection against heat and cold, without walking stick or provisions, on foot, Father Henry would go into the open country to visit the Indians in their tepees or log cabins, sit down or squat down, talk with them, and in talking give them informal instruction in Christian faith and life. The Indians learned to revere and love their *Puti Sapa* ("Black Beard"), as they called him. "He speaks like we do." In the evening, he would walk back to the mission. On one of those apostolic days he had baptized a dying infant. At home, that evening, he told the Brothers, "Even if until now we had on this mission done nothing



BISHOP MARTIN MARTY, O.S.B., FEBRUARY 1, 1880 TO
SEPTEMBER 19, 1896

at all for heaven, yet today we certainly have sent a soul to heaven. We feel rewarded for our work."

Interest in the Indian mission did not cease at St. Meinrad with the departure of Bishop Marty for his now independent mission field. When, in 1881, Marty sent two Indian boys, Fintan Mantochna and Giles Tapetola, to study at St. Meinrad, Father Luke Gruwe with their help studied the Sioux language and composed a grammar of it. This manuscript was sent to Dakota to be of help to the missionaries in studying the difficult language. Further, the sacrifices that the Abbey continued to make in the upkeep of the missions established and in the founding of new ones were continuous evidence of its mission spirit.

The diocese of Vincennes, too, at that time was mindful of Bishop Marty's mission needs. Bishop Chatard, aware of the poverty of the new Vicariate and of the personal pennilessness of its Vicar, issued (November 14, 1882) a pastoral letter to raise a Diocesan collection for him. The Bishop wrote of the obligation in general that the faithful have to support the missionary in his hard work of converting the Indians and of keeping them in the faith. He continued the letter with an appreciative tribute to Bishop Marty's and, indirectly, the Abbey's work for the Diocese of Vincennes:

The Vicariate Apostolic of Dakota, where the Indians are numerous, has been allotted to the spiritual government of one to whom the Diocese of Vincennes owes a debt of gratitude. The Rt. Rev. Martin Marty was Abbot of St. Meinrad's, Spencer Co.; and prior to his elevation to that high dignity, as well as during his time of tenure, he labored most strenuously for the welfare of the Diocese; and so much did our Predecessor, Rt. Rev. Maurice de St. Palais, of worthy memory, appreciate his efforts, that he entrusted to him the care and instruction of his Seminarians. The evidences of the zeal of Rt. Rev. Dr. Marty are to be found everywhere in the exemplary life of priests trained by him, and in their spirit of attachment to the Holy See, and of conformity with its liturgical laws and customs. If to this you join the active Missionary work done by him everywhere, throughout the Diocese, you can readily understand

how fitting it is that for this once, Dearly Beloved Brethren, you should give generously for his Indians—[of whom] many [are] Catholics, but more [are] helpless in the darkness of infidelity. Aid him to place in their midst the Priest of God—a guide for their feet, a friend in their need, a counsellor in doubt, a comforter in their hardships and afflictions. The work is a noble one of Christian Charity, and all who take part in it, by giving of their means, will have the blessing of God.

The collection amounted to \$1,718.75. In acknowledgment of the charity shown, Bishop Marty, on February 1, 1883, wrote an interesting report on the Indian mission field in Dakota, in which he sketched the work done so far and pointed to the ever expanding work still to be done.⁸⁷

For one who had not in his own soul and body felt the anxieties and privations of those hard beginnings it was difficult to appreciate the work accomplished under those distressing circumstances; and one who would set his mind only upon a most perfect accomplishment despite the scantiest means, might be inclined to overemphasize shortcomings in the work of the early missionaries. But Bishop Marty, who as Abbot had with his Benedictine confreres in person lived through the frequently appalling conditions of those first years, especially at Standing Rock, was ready to come to the monks' defense when, in 1883, the Bureau of the Catholic Indian Missions criticized them to him; it seems that a supercilious and perhaps biased Government inspector was responsible for the main criticism, though not for all. The Bishop retorted:

St. Meinrad has made great sacrifices and exertions for the Indian schools, though there was not the success which we desire. It is much easier to criticize than to improve, and we never had a chance to give our explanation of the failures. I spent the winter in Yates and two thirds of the time the cold winds were so strong that, in the log building as

⁸⁷ "Fort Yates, Dakota Ty., Feb. 1, 1883. Rt. Rev. F. S. Chatard, Bishop of Vincennes." Bishop Chatard sent this report to the *Catholic Universe*, Cleveland, O., which printed it in its last issue of the month of March, 1883.

well as in the frame building fronting on the river, life was a real hardship.

There was no neglect of duty anywhere, when the infidel Milburn [the inspector] spent a quarter of an hour in the schoolroom and made fun of the poor boys, whose feelings he considers of equal consequence with those of his dogs.—You know how hard it is for Indian children to overcome their bashfulness even when they are in the presence of friends, and how slow they are in showing what they have learned.

Where the money went which could be spared, everybody can see in the two churches which have been built at Standing Rock. If the Brothers and Fathers who came among the Indians failed to do their full duty, they were the only ones willing to do anything at all. Others were ready to find fault with them at a distance, but not to come and do better themselves.⁸⁸

Later, the Bureau itself had high praise for these same missionaries. Father Ketcham, its director, wrote, in 1906: "Bishop Marty, O.S.B., seems to have been particularly gifted as a director of mission work among Indians, and the results accomplished by the zealous Benedictine missionaries have been most remarkable. Indeed, in modern times, they have not been surpassed."⁸⁹ And on January 29, 1920, he wrote again: "The Fathers St. Meinrad has in the mission field of North and South Dakota are truly jewels. They reflect the greatest credit on the Abbey and on the Order."⁹⁰

This chapter has undertaken to sketch only the beginning of the mission work that St. Meinrad's Abbey undertook among the Indians of the Dakota Territory. A special volume would be required to do justice even to this beginning, let alone the work accomplished until the present day. Any unbiased observer can convince himself,

⁸⁸ Bishop Marty to Brouillet, July 27, 1883.

⁸⁹ *Report of the Director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions for 1906*, p. 5.

⁹⁰ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 9, division *Marty* (W. H. Ketcham to Fr. Fintan Wiederkehr, O.S.B., formerly one of the mission force in S. Dakota until illness forced him to retire from that work).

by inspecting the missions as they now stand, that those missionaries—monks and nuns—have, not as angels but as human beings, by the alchemy of prayer and work changed—and still are changing—materially, cents into dollars, and culturally and spiritually, the once dreaded *Sioux* ("Enemies") into the neighborly *Dakota* ("Friends")—and children of God.

CHAPTER X

ABBOT FINTAN MUNDWILER, O.S.B., (FEBRUARY 3, 1880 TO FEBRUARY 14, 1897). MONASTIC LIFE. SCHOOL. NEW FOUNDATIONS. THE SWISS-AMERICAN CONGREGATION; ITS DECLARATIONS AND CONSTITUTIONS; ITS **CALENDARUM** AND **DIRECTORIUM**.

ON FEBRUARY 3, 1880, the Chapter met to elect an Abbot. The Ordinary of the Diocese, Bishop Francis Silas Chatard, presided. In his wonted humble and pleasant manner Abbot Fintan wrote to the Abbot of Einsiedeln about the result of the election: "I feel like applying to it the words of Horace: '*Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.*' At the first ballot little Fintan came out of the urn. I do not know what I should think or say. Under the present circumstances I could not well refuse."¹ And to the Dean of Einsiedeln he wrote:

Can this, then, be the answer to the many prayers for a happy issue of the election? May the will of God be done. Bishop Marty left here yesterday . . . , and I feel as though I were standing alone on an open plain. I have not yet accustomed my self to the new title. Pray much for me that God give me strength and judgment. The confidence which my confreres manifest toward me . . . greatly encourages me to assume the heavy burden. The manifold fraternal support, the prayers offered for me, and the unmistakable signs that this is God's will let me hope that God, who chooses the weak and the lowly, will supply what is wanting to me, if only I do not make myself unworthy of the help

¹ St. M. Ll. XI, pp. 1076-1077 (Feb. 5, 1880).

of His grace, which, unfortunately, is to be feared. Therefore, I should like very much to beg you to pray for me.²

The confirmation of the election arrived at St. Meinrad on April 24. Abbot Fintan received the solemn blessing as Abbot from the hands of Bishop Chatard on Trinity Sunday, May 23, in the frame church still used by the parish.

Since, as Prior, he had during the preceding four years practically managed the affairs of the Abbey, Abbot Fintan was well acquainted with every phase of its activity in the cloister as well as beyond it. But whereas Abbot Martin had been called "the strict father," whose driving zeal to reconstruct Benedictinism according to his ideals kept the community in strenuous marching order, Abbot Fintan was designated "the kind mother," whose spiritual humane-ness purposed to lead souls to God in a more congenial manner. True, there were some who to their detriment took undue advantage of his mildness, but the community by and large benefited from it.

After a year of Abbot Fintan's regime, monastic life had again become "homey," so Father Isidor wrote to the Dean of Einsiedeln on January 31, 1881. He attributed the change chiefly to the conferences that the Abbot had been conducting for a month with the Fathers and Fraters every evening from 7:00 to 7:30 o'clock. These conferences were not lectures on the part of the Abbot; they were quite informal; first, the Abbot would make some remarks about what was to be specially observed next day in the Divine Office or in Holy Mass, or in regard to the work, or some special event; next, he would ask whether anybody wished to propose something for consideration: liturgical, disciplinary, school, kitchen, and cellar matters would be brought up and talked over. If time remained, there would be reading from the Statutes, which, in turn, would be talked over, point after point.

Abbot Fintan favored the Einsiedeln monastic observances with discreet adaption to the situation in the United States, but without admitting anything that might savor of laxness; in that he could

² *Ibid.* (Feb. 10, 1880).

be firm. Both Abbot Martin and Abbot Fintan—each according to his own manner—advocated an energetic monastic life at St. Meinrad, and with much success. Even during the last year of Abbot Martin in office, in 1879, Prior Frowin of Conception had written to Abbot Basil of Einsiedeln:

Regarding St. Meinrad, I believe I may conscientiously congratulate you that it has happily overcome its crisis. There was a time when I too was not pleased with several things there; many a thing seemed to me to be too strict. But what appealed to me was the good spirit that prevailed in that monastery, and even at that time I had the conviction that the untenable would gradually eliminate itself. Now I have received from a very impartial side a description of the Silver Jubilee celebration of St. Meinrad on the feast of St. Benedict, that aroused in me the wish: May our young monastery in twenty-five years deserve such a testimony. No new monastery gets by without a conflict; but given a good spirit, as is the case under the splendid direction of Abbot Martin, it will gradually triumph over the more subordinate things. But all things take their time. So also here.³

Without diminishing Abbot Martin's share in this praise, one may safely say that some of it is due to his faithful Prior Fintan who, especially since the beginning of 1876, had during Abbot Martin's frequent and prolonged periods of absence been the gentle yet effective pattern of monastic life.

As Abbot, Father Fintan continued his contact with the community not only by his regular participation in choir service and by the instructions he gave the Novices but also by his easy mingling with the community at work and at recreation. At recreation he would occasionally walk with the Clerics. He would not impose upon them a topic of conversation but rather would ask them what they had been talking about. Ordinarily the topic was related to their studies. He would then join in, usually taking the opposite side of the question; he did so to induce them to formulate their argu-

³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (May 10, 1879).



ABBOT FINTAN MUNDWILER, O.S.B., FEBRUARY 3, 1880
TO FEBRUARY 14, 1897

ments clearly and convincingly. When he thought that they had done that much effectively, he would candidly grant their point.

Abbot Fintan could be expected to show up during work at which the community took part. One time during the grape harvest, a conscientious Cleric asked him whether one might occasionally eat a grape. The Abbot, usually ready to apply a Scripture thought to a

situation, answered, smilingly: "Holy Scripture says: 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain.'"

On another occasion the Abbot and one of the Fathers were driving to the railway station. In those days the roads at times—especially after the spring thaw—were most difficult of travel. At one place the horses and the buggy were mired so deep that the two travelers had to step out into the mud to lighten the conveyance. The Abbot said good-naturedly: "*Infixus sum in limo terrae, et non est substantia*" ("I am sunk in the abysmal swamp, where there is no foothold." Ps. 68: 3.)

His instructions, as well as his sermons, bore the mark of simplicity and sincerity, the characteristics of his own life. In his treatise, *The Interior Life*, written in simple and clear language, he unwittingly revealed his own spiritual life.⁴

In good soil his instructions and guidance in spiritual life produced very good fruit. One example is deserving of special mention. Anthony Ackermann, born in Switzerland, on September 3, 1845, made his classical studies at the monastic school at Einsiedeln. Upon his graduation he resolved to become a Benedictine at St. Meinrad. He was a young man of delicate conscience and of great humility, yet at the same time of great energy. It was characteristic of him that he was deeply grieved when on his way to America he heard someone on board ship use blasphemous language; as he wrote to a Father at Einsiedeln, the incident made him think of his "own sins" and caused him to pray for his "own conversion." Arrived at Troy, Indiana, he eagerly turned his face, on November 2, 1870, toward the goal of his youthful aspirations. He covered the fourteen miles to St. Meinrad on foot; and, so he wrote to Einsiedeln, he did it gladly because the solitary walk gave him the opportunity to meditate—the beautiful scenery, especially the forests with their majestic oaks, reminding him of the beauty and grandeur of God. And when his eyes first caught sight of the monastery tower, he in the joy of his heart fell upon his knees to greet his future home. At his profession

⁴ *St. Benedikts-Panier*. V (1893), pp. 20 ss. 37. 52. 69; VI (1894), pp. 23 ss; 47. 62. 76. (*Das Innere Leben*).

of vows, on December 21, 1871, he took the name Conrad—a name most dear to Einsiedeln. He was ordained priest on September 20, 1872.

After several appointments on the missions Father Conrad, then thirty years of age, was sent to Troy in the beginning of May, 1876. He soon endeared himself not only to his parish but also to non-Catholics. In 1883, Abbot Fintan wrote of him: "I am very well pleased with Father Conrad . . . he takes a good hold. He is much loved by his parish." In 1945, Miss Priscilla Hinchco, who was born at Troy, on March 14, 1860, when asked about Father Conrad, answered with warmth and reverence: "He was a saint, if ever there was one. He worked hard and was so good." Lawrence O. Connor, a Methodist, expressed himself in similar terms and added: "Everybody loved Father Conrad." Connor used to chum with several Catholic boys and to join them even in the informal instructions in Catholic doctrine that Father Conrad used to give them. After that they would all help him clean up about the yard. He would end by giving each of them a nickel—in those days a nickel looked big to a boy. Father Conrad suffered under one handicap; he could scarcely speak any English, and yet his considerateness for a few English-speaking members of the parish prompted him to read the Epistle and Gospel also in English; "but," said Miss Hinchco with a smile, "he should not have attempted that."

The little frame house that up till then had served as rectory scarcely deserved that name. Father Conrad built the present two-story brick rectory, minus the later additions of the bay windows and the porch.

Father Conrad's main work in the material order was the building of the church which still is the joy of the parish and the landmark of Troy. According to people who saw the building go up, Father Conrad was architect, general superintendent, common laborer, and paymaster. He erected a special brickyard and helped burn and handle brick; sometimes his hands bled from the rough work. At times he would tell a Negro hodcarrier: "It's too hot. Sit down and rest a while"; then, bending his own back to the burden,

he would carry the hod up the scaffolding. He also helped lay the inside brick; in fact he would do whatever was to be done. And such was the charm of his example and the esteem in which he stood with the public that some non-Catholics also lent a hand in the work.

Father Conrad had started work on the church not in a dramatic act, with himself as the central figure, but with a delicate act of deference to one of his faithful altar boys. George Paulin, at that time nine years of age, had run some errand for him. It was raining. Father Conrad said to him: "Come, George, we will start on the church." He gave George a spade and, while he himself held an umbrella over the boy, bade him dig up the first three lumps of ground from the spot where the sanctuary was to be. Throughout his life George Paulin revered the memory of Father Conrad.

The foundation stone was laid by Abbot Fintan, on the fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary, September 18, 1881. As to financing the building, Father Conrad did not wade beyond his depth; he built slowly but solidly, as the building still testifies. The church was dedicated on the seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, again the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, September 28, 1884.

At the completion of these two major projects there was a debt of only \$250; but a goodly portion of Father Conrad's young life was built into this church.

Since Father Conrad's health had begun to suffer, Abbot Fintan recalled him to St. Meinrad, on December 21, the Sunday before Christmas of the same year, and, on February 28, 1885, appointed him Prior of the monastery—a position which became all the more weighty by reason of the absence of the Abbot during his visit to Rome. Father Bede Maler, O.S.B., his contemporary, wrote of Father Conrad: "In his position as Prior he proved himself a loving and kind father to all the members of the monastery." Besides being Prior, he was also the Instructor of the Brother Novices. More than fifty-nine years after Father Conrad's death, the aged Brother Odilo Stocker, O.S.B., one of his quondam novices, when asked unexpect-

edly whether he had known Father Conrad, answered with visible joy: "Oh, that was a fine man: loveable and so considerate of others. He is in heaven long ago."

When Father Conrad's ailment was recognized as tuberculosis, Abbot Fintan relieved him of his office on May 5, 1887, and sent him to the Catholic hospital at Belleville, Illinois; and when it was judged that the stay in the hospital would not benefit the patient, Abbot Fintan on July 27, 1887, sent him on a visit to his home in Switzerland, in the hope that his native mountain air might have the desired effect. When Father Conrad felt the futility of all efforts in behalf of his health, he made his way, on September 6, to the monastery of Einsiedeln, where he had begun his studies. His beautiful soul shines forth from the two letters he wrote from his deathbed to Abbot Fintan: though by reason of the frequency and violence of hemorrhages from his lungs he might expect death at any hour, he consoled and encouraged the Abbot in the severe trial caused by the disastrous fire at St. Meinrad on September 2, 1887; as to himself, he had resigned himself completely into the hands of God. Aware of the gravity of his own condition, the patient had requested and had received the sacraments of the dying. Always more thoughtful of others than of himself, this dying monk in a postscript to his very last letter requested that Abbot Fintan would occasionally cheer up a certain person, whom he named, who at times felt greatly depressed. God called his faithful young servant to his reward on December 2, 1887. His mortal remains were laid to rest at Einsiedeln, in the midst of some of his former friends and professors. Abbot Fintan wrote to Einsiedeln to thank the monks for the charity they had shown their confrere from St. Meinrad. Father Bede (*St. Meinrad Raben*, January 21, 1888) wrote of him: "Father Conrad was a simple, child-like soul, full of loyalty and humility and deep piety. As a religious and priest he was solicitously intent upon the faithful fulfilment of his duties for the sake of God and unto His glory, and so he combined in a touching beautiful harmony great severity toward himself and loving kindness toward others."—The memory of Father Conrad Ackermann ought always to be held in benediction at St. Meinrad.



THE COMMUNITY, ST. MEINRAD ABBEY, 1885

Names of persons represented in illustration on the opposite page:

Front row (left of reader): 1. Brother Joseph Schaeuble; 2. Br. Hilary Benetz; 3. Pater Leo Schwab; 4. P. Nazar Werner; 5. P. Alphons Leute; 6. P. Conrad Ackermann (Prior); 7. Abbot Fintan Mundwiler; 8. P. Isidor Hobi; 9. P. Maurus Helfrich; 10. P. Alexander Burkart; 11. P. Sigisbert Zarn; 12. Lucas Gruwe; 13. P. Basil Heusler;

Middle row: Br. Novice John; 2. Frater Thomas Weikert; 3. Fr. Fintan Wiederkehr; 4. Fr. Anselm Meier; 5. Br. Candidate Xavier; 6. Fr. Martin Hoppenjans; 7. Fr. Nov. George (P. Joachim) Widmer; 8. Br. Nabor Glauber; 9. Adelgott Hufschmid; 10. Br. Nov. Edward; 11. Br. Cand. Jakob (Br. Ferdinand) Laeng; 12. Br. Franz Bessler; 13. Br. Blaise Meier;

Top row: 1. Fr. Gregory Bechtold; 2. Fr. Simon Barber; 3. Br. Basilides Hyland; 4. Fr. Bonaventure Goebel; 5. Br. Cand. Franz; 6. Fr. Athanasius Schmitt; 7. Br. Cand. Philip; 8. Fr. Nov. Joseph (P. Paul) Schaeuble; 9. Br. Cand. Sebastian (Br. Odilo) Stocker; 10. Fr. Nov. Sales (P. Bernard) Heichelbech; 11. Br. Cand. Joseph; 12. Fr. Nov. Charles (P. Dominic) Barthel; 13. Fr. Nov. (P. Vincent) Wagner; 14. Br. Michael Schnurr; 15. Br. Anthony Mannhart; 16. Br. Thaddeus Hoelzle; 17. Br. Martial Kraus; 18. Br. Nereus Strosyk.

St. Meinrad continued to consider the school its main intramural work. The school had felt the withdrawal of several Fathers, especially of Abbot Martin, to the Indian missions. To compensate for this loss, Abbot Martin also had several secular priests teaching, priests for whom Bishops had for disciplinary reasons requested the benefit of a temporary sojourn at St. Meinrad. Abbot Martin's charity toward an unfortunate priest was great; it stayed with him even as a Bishop, though it became the source of much grief to him. But, at the request of the Fathers, Abbot Fintan withdrew such teachers from the training school of future priests; further, in the interest of monastic observance he no longer accepted such guests in the monastery. To obtain the necessary number of Fathers for the school and the missions, Abbot Fintan asked Abbot Basil of Einsiedeln as President of the Swiss-Benedictine Congregation to petition the Holy See to grant to the Swiss-American Congregation the faculty that the Swiss-Benedictine Congregation had, of having Clerical Tonsure and the Clerical Orders, including the priesthood, conferred upon Fraters who were professed merely with simple vows "*ad instar votorum solemnium*." The petition was granted on May 6, 1883. There really was no need of this petition because the American-Swiss Congregation enjoyed the communication of privileges with the Swiss-Benedictine Congregation. Abbot Fintan availed himself of this faculty the last time in 1890.

To the end of the 1879-1880 scholastic year, Abbot Fintan continued to teach dogmatic theology, pastoral, and homiletics. During that scholastic year, the school numbered a total of 111 students.

The new college building was finished in January, 1881, and the collegiate students joyfully moved up from the old, frame building into the new, massive stone building; as they expressed it, they were leaving the Old and were entering the New Testament.

On September 1, 1882, the old college building was made the residence hall for students who intended to become Benedictines. From that time on, it was called the Scholasticate. Father Meinrad McCarthy was its Rector, but only for its first year. In September, 1893, the Scholasticate was discontinued as a separate unit and since



THE ORCHESTRA, 1885

Bottom Row, left to right:—Father Joachim; Frater Thomas Weikert; George Ziegenfuss; Frater Martin Hoppenjans; Frater Anselm Meier (Director); Frater Dominic Barthel; Frater Bonaventura Goebel; Frater Vincent Wagner; Father Maurus Helfrich.

Second Row:—Bro Basilides Hyland; Father Luke Gruwe; Peter Baron; Theodore Klingel; Bro. Anthony Manhart.

Third Row:—Joseph Suter; John Anderau; Frater Athanasius Schmitt; Frater Paul Schaeuble; Frater Bernard Heichelbech; Frater Gregory Bechtold.

then the scholastics have lived with the students in the Minor Seminary.

Though they intensively cultivated the interior, spiritual life, both Abbot Martin and Abbot Fintan were also men of a vigorous external activity demanded by the interests of the Church. It was especially Abbot Martin who held that the organic union of these two activities represented the genuine spirit of St. Benedict and that without some external activity the order would become stagnant. This idea was a predominant factor in St. Meinrad's taking up missionary work in Dakota. For this reason, too, particularly Abbot Martin advocated the founding of many monasteries as centers of Christian culture.

The founding of Conception Abbey, Missouri, was made by the monastery of Engelberg, Switzerland; but St. Meinrad played an important role in it. When, in 1871, there seemed to be grave danger for the continuance of the monasteries in Switzerland, the Abbot of Engelberg had Father Frowin Conrad, O.S.B., write to Abbot Martin a letter of inquiry about the possibility of Engelberg's making a foundation in the United States.⁵ Father Frowin had studied theology at Einsiedeln, where he was a classmate of Abbot Martin. He wrote the letter of inquiry on December 15, 1871.

Abbot Martin answered at once, and enthusiastically, on January 17, 1872: two Fathers from Engelberg should come as soon as possible to St. Meinrad, he said, to acquaint themselves with the language, the country, the people, and so forth; from here they could look about for a place to make a foundation. However, since by that time the danger for Engelberg seemed past, its Abbot hesitated.

But Abbot Martin did not desist; he sent a second and, on November 21, a third letter, urging Engelberg to undertake a foundation.⁶ In the third letter Abbot Martin wrote that Bishop John Joseph Hogan, of St. Joseph, Missouri, had recently asked St. Mein-

⁵Father Frowin's letters here quoted are in the archives of St. Meinrad Archabbey.

⁶*Die Benediktiner in Conception, Missouri. Eine Festgabe.*

rad to make a foundation near the city of St. Joseph; for that purpose the Bishop had offered 300 acres of land, a beautiful Gothic church, and a roomy house, big enough for a small monastic family. If Engelberg would send two Fathers, St. Meinrad would accept the donation in their name.

Even then the Abbot and the Chapter of Engelberg took five months to consider the offer. They finally decided to send two monks, Fathers Frowin Conrad and Adelhelm Odermatt, O.S.B., to undertake the foundation.

Informed that Engelberg had decided favorably, Abbot Martin sent Father Fintan Mundwiler to St. Joseph to accept Bishop Hogan's offer formally for Engelberg. On May 20, 1873, Father Fintan arrived at St. Joseph. But he found that the Bishop had not heard soon enough of the decision of Engelberg and had given the church and property to the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood.

However, it so happened that at Father Fintan's arrival the Reverend James D. Powers, who was about to give up his very unsettled parish at Conception, was staying with the Bishop. He had offered the Bishop 260 acres of land and \$1,000 of his own money as an inducement for a religious community to take over the parish and save it from complete disintegration. The offer was now made to Father Fintan. In company with Father Powers he inspected the place; whereupon he recommended that the two Fathers from Engelberg accept it.

The two Engelberg monks, together with a Brother Candidate, had arrived at St. Meinrad on May 29, 1873. They were received most cordially and were instructed in the English language and in American ways.

Meanwhile, Father Fintan was doing pastoral work at the parish in Weston. He visited Conception from there, again carefully inspected the situation, and sent another favorable report to St. Meinrad and to the two Fathers from Engelberg. Pleased with the report, Abbot Martin ordered Father Fintan to build a house for the future community. Father Fintan did so in the autumn of that year. The building was nearing completion when the little community arrived

at St. Joseph. Father Fintan hastened to meet them on September 17. He conducted them to their new home, which they called New Engelberg, later known simply as Conception Abbey. For nearly two more months Father Fintan continued to work at Weston, where he could be of prompt help to the little community until they would become used to life in their unaccustomed surroundings.

Only after this truly unselfish work of brotherly love—the Right Reverend Adelhelm Odermatt remarked: “Prior Fintan Mundwiler had warmed our nest in Conception and Maryville”⁷—only then did Prior Fintan return to St. Meinrad. From here he wrote to Father Frowin on November 20:

Thanks be to God! At last I am back again in my hermitage. I arrived here on the fourteenth of this month and on the following day I immediately felt so much at home as though I had never been away; the seven months I spent in Missouri are to me like a dream, and it seems to me as though the flow of my customary monastic life has not been interrupted at all. I myself can hardly understand how after so irregular a nomadic life I at once again felt at home in the quiet monastic life.⁸

Those who knew him could have given him the explanation: Prior Fintan—the same remained true of him after he had become Abbot—was a model religious when he was away from the monastery as well as when he was in the cloister.

In 1879 and 1880, young Frater Luke Gruwe, O.S.B., of St. Meinrad Abbey, made the plans for the new monastery building and the church at Conception Abbey.

A banker at Lafayette, Indiana, had offered Bishop Dwenger, of Fort Wayne, 320 acres for the foundation of a monastery. In the summer of 1875 Bishop Dwenger invited Abbot Martin to undertake the foundation. Abbot Martin, glad at the prospect of a new foundation, negotiated with the Bishop and then turned the project over to Father Aegidius Hennemann, O.S.B. Father Aegidius, of St.

⁷ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Letter to Abbot Athanasius Schmitt, O.S.B., May 2, 1920).

⁸ Archives, Conception Abbey.

Boniface Monastery, Munich, Bavaria, who had come to the United States for the purpose of making a foundation, was, as a guest, well known at St. Meinrad.

But since it turned out that the banker did not enjoy the best reputation and had attached certain unacceptable conditions to the gift, Father Aegidius turned the offer down; instead he accepted another offer, at the Bishop's request, on April 17, 1876, for a foundation of a monastery and college at Crown Point, Lake County. For that purpose Abbot Martin sent Father Meinrad McCarthy, O.S.B., to be of temporary help to Father Aegidius.

But after two years Father Aegidius relinquished the project and went to St. Benedict, the new foundation that St. Meinrad was making in Arkansas. He arrived there on April 15, 1878.

The Bishop of Little Rock, Arkansas, tried repeatedly to induce him to found a school in the city of Little Rock; eventually, in 1880, he made him his Vicar General and Rector of the cathedral. Father Aegidius functioned as such until about the beginning of 1883, when he purchased from the New Orleans and Texas Railway a section (640 acres) of excellent land near Vermillion, St. Landry Parish, 160 miles west of New Orleans, which he intended to use for a foundation. But then Father Aegidius grew very sick with tuberculosis. On November 26 of that year word reached St. Meinrad that he lay in a dying condition in New Orleans. He died on Christmas day, 1883. His last will, dated October 13, had made his friend, the Reverend S. L. Thévis, pastor of Trinity Church, New Orleans, the testamentary legatee of all his landed property.

This property, however, was burdened to its full value with debts. First of all, John Kraft, of Crown Point, Indiana, held a promissory note of Father Aegidius to the amount of \$2,308, which note Father Thévis subscribed and endorsed to save the property from public sale. Secondly, Father Thévis estimated the expenses for Father Aegidius' illness and funeral at \$600. There was still another note to the amount of \$200. Before his death Father Aegidius had expressed great concern for the payment of these debts.

Father Thévis naturally approached St. Boniface Monastery in Munich first, but St. Boniface declined to have anything to do with this affair. Father Thévis next appealed to Abbot Fintan, since Father Aegidius had had some contact with St. Meinrad. It was out of regard for the memory of Father Aegidius rather than for any financial consideration that Abbot Fintan resolved to take up the problem.

Abbot Fintan returned from the Third Plenary Council at Baltimore, which closed on December 7, 1884, and went directly to Belleville, Illinois, to attend to some business with the Fathers stationed there. Then he went to Louisiana to inspect the property in question. He purchased it on December 18, 1884, for \$3,042.

The Reverend John Wernich, Rector of St. Paul Church, Tell City, Indiana, had, some ten days before that, with the power of attorney for John Kraft, gone to New Orleans in the interest of his client and with the intention of transferring the body of Father Aegidius to Indiana. Father Wernich accompanied the casket to Tell City, where he arrived on December 22. The body was kept in the sacristy of the church until April 30, 1885. That day a solemn funeral service was held in St. Paul's in the presence of "an immense concourse of people and of many priests, both secular and regular, the Very Rev. Conrad Ackermann, O.S.B., Prior of St. Meinrad, being Celebrant of the Solemn *Requiem*, and the Rev. Maurice Kaeder, O.S.B., from Crown Point preaching." After the *Libera*—followed, strangely enough, by the "*Salve Regina*"—the corpse was solemnly taken to St. Meinrad, where on May 2 Abbot Fintan celebrated a Pontifical *Requiem* in the still roofless crypt. The corpse was then placed in a stone vault constructed on the floor of the southern end of the crypt. Father Wernich placed on the breast of the corpse the still "well preserved manuscript of his life, labors, and suffering."⁹

⁹ Archabbey archives (Fintan to Frowin, Aug. 31, 1875); St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1054 (Fintan to the Dean of Eins., Nov. 25, 1875); Conception Abbey archives (Martin to Frowin, Apr. 24, 1876; Fintan to Frowin, Feb. 15, 1884; Jan. 22, 1885); St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1260 (Isidor to the Dean of Eins., May 6, 1885); Deeds, St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 11, folder, *St. Leo*,

The undertaking of Father Aegidius in Louisiana did not develop into a monastic foundation. On April 15, 1885, Abbot Fintan took Father Silvan Buschor and Brother Clement Seichter to the new possession; the two were to manage the property and to look after the little parish of St. Leo and several missions. Before long, Father Silvan and Brother Clement were joined by Father Felix Rumpf and Brother Francis Bessler. When, in 1889, St. Joseph Monastery was begun in Gessen, Louisiana, one of the Fathers and the two Brothers were eventually withdrawn from St. Leo and there remained only one of the Fathers, as the pastor. On May 31, 1907, St. Meinrad sold 600 acres of the property; some of it had been sold earlier and the remainder was sold on September 16, 1930. Father Leo Schwab, O.S.B., the last Benedictine to take care of St. Leo parish, returned to St. Meinrad on November 7, 1930.¹⁰

On November 5, 1877, Abbot Martin wrote to Prior Frowin of Conception that "another favorable opportunity has been offered me [to make a foundation] in [Logan County,] Arkansas." That offer was negotiated by Anton Hellmich. Hellmich, at that time still the chief editor of the German daily *Amerika*, was also the land agent for the colonization project that the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railway Company had begun. The founding of a Benedictine monastery as a mission center would, of course, be a strong inducement for Catholics to settle in that territory.

Abbot Martin was favorably disposed toward the project, but only upon special terms laid down by him. Wherefore it was mutually agreed that the company:

Louisiana; Death Records, 1870; St. Paul Church, Tell City, Ind., pp. 16-17; St. M. Ll. XI, p. 1276 (Isidor to the Dean of Eins., Dec. 15, 1893).—When according to new plans the church was to be built farther north and the site of the old crypt was to be occupied by the present north wings of the Archabbey, the corpse was transferred to the monastic cemetery in 1888.

¹⁰For requests of Abbot Paul Schaeuble concerning that property, see his memorial and his correspondence with Abbot Frowin (folder *Rt. Rev. Paul Schaeuble, O.S.B., St. Joseph's Abbey Letters*) and reply of Abbot Athanasius Schmitt, O.S.B., Conception Abbey archives (Abbot Athanasius to Abbot Frowin, Apr. 3, 1907).

1. Donate a section of land on which the monks were to build a monastery;
2. Donate a tract of 100 acres for a Sisters' convent;
3. Contribute \$2,500 toward the erection of the necessary buildings for the two institutions;
4. For a period of three years sell land in Logan County only to Catholics or to parties known and agreeable to Mr. Hellmich.

On his part, Abbot Martin agreed:

1. Not to sell any of the donated land, but to cultivate it for the benefit of the contemplated institutions;
2. To erect the necessary buildings;
3. To send a sufficient number of priests for pastoral work among the colonists.

The Fathers at St. Meinrad were surprised when they saw an article in the *Amerika* announcing the transaction; it was the first information the Chapter members had of the project. About the same time Abbot Martin sent orders to Prior Fintan that Father Wolfgang should go at once to St. Louis and there call on Hellmich, who would conduct him to Logan County, where he should select one of two sections that would be shown him. Father Wolfgang was not able to make the journey just then, and Father Isidor went in his place, during the last week of November.

Father Isidor was a good Rector and a good professor, but it seems that he was less qualified as a judge of useful land. His Swiss heart was entranced by the scenery of a section which had several stony hills from the slope of one of which issued a perennial spring of wholesome water. He recommended the section as "the paradise fallen from heaven." On December 8, at the land office, he complied with the legal formalities involved in taking possession of the section. When, later, the pioneers of the new foundation bantered him about the real qualities of his "paradise from heaven," he retorted in his wonted good humor that their sins had wrought the change.

Abbot Martin returned from Dakota by way of Arkansas where

during the first week of February, 1878, he personally inspected and approved Father Isidor's selection.¹¹

On March 6, 1878, Father Wolfgang, Brother Caspar Hildesheim, and Brother Hilary Benetz, perched on the driver's seat of a farm wagon drawn by two mules, started on their journey of 700 miles to Logan County, Arkansas. Two cows and two pigs rode along in the guarded wagon box. Another wagon, loaded with necessary luggage, followed as far as Troy. To the pigs, this trip must have seemed too much like going "to market." Near Fulda they jumped from the wagon and took to the woods, the travelers after them. After the live bacon had again been brought home to the wagon, the jolting journey continued.

Next morning the wagon with its living contents was driven on board the boat bound for Memphis, Tennessee. At Rockport three families from St. Anthony, Dubois County, Indiana, numbering in all 21 souls, also bound for Logan County, came on board.

At Memphis they entrained for Little Rock, Arkansas, and from there to Spadra. At Spadra the monks again mounted their wagon and drove fifteen miles to their destination. At four o'clock they stopped at the home of a colonist, who refreshed them with corn bread, eggs, and coffee.

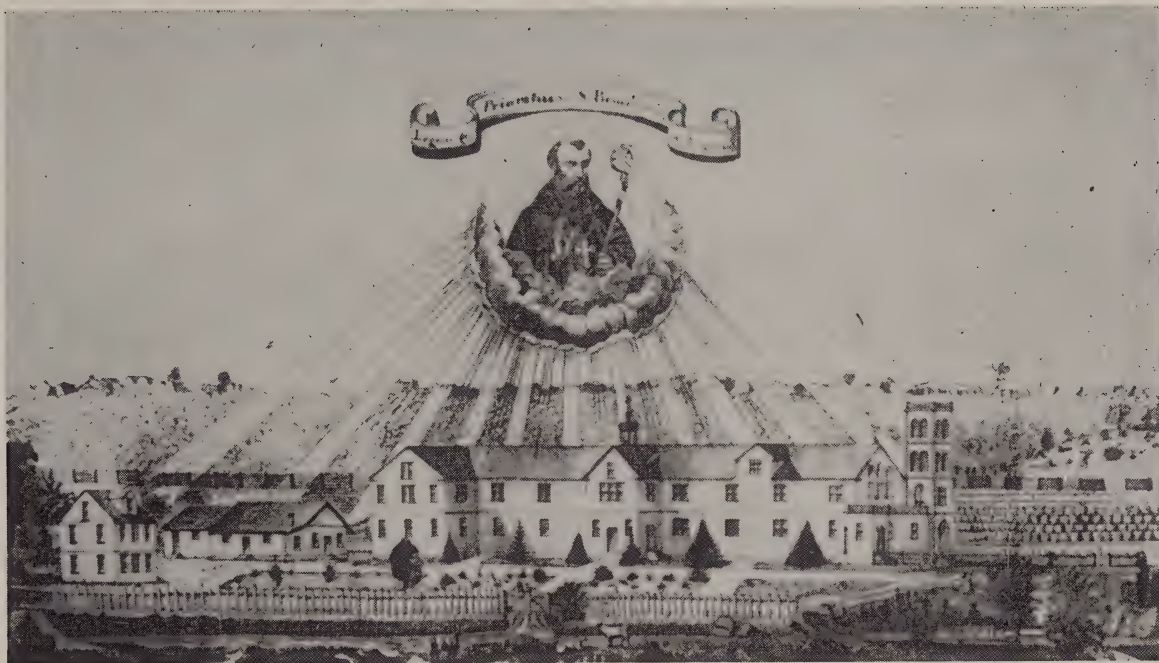
Arrived at their future home, at six o'clock in the evening of March 15, they found a primitive and neglected log cabin with "one room, 16 by 16 feet, lit up, during the day, by a window with six [small] panes, and illumined, at night, by the moon sending its light in through countless holes and cracks in the roof and in the walls." Father Wolfgang entered the cabin with "*Pax huic domui.*" It was to be called St. Benedict. The convent, to be built ten miles to the east, would be called St. Scholastica.

¹¹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 9, *New Subiaco Abbey* (Anton Hellmich to Prior Fintan, Nov. 24, 1877; to P. Isidor, Jan. 8, 1878; Jan. 24, 1878); St. M. Ll. VII, p. 829-856 (P. Wolfgang to the Dean of Eins., Nov. 30, Dec. 20, Dec. 29, 1877; P. Isidor to P. Eberhard, Dec. 5, 7, 1877; P. Wolfgang to the Dean, Aug. 23, 1880); P. Ildephons Kalt, O.S.B., *St. Scholastica in Arkansas, Nord Amerika, 1879-1904*.

Instead of supper, they had the Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. On the following day, Saturday, Hellmich had one of the settlers from several miles away bring the monks ample provisions for the time being; Hellmich also had some of the luggage brought from the railway station. On the same day Father Wolfgang made ready to celebrate holy Mass on the next day, the second Sunday in Lent; but, alas, Hellmich had not brought the all-important box containing the requisites for the celebration of the holy sacrifice.

The news that the Benedictines had arrived and the prospect of divine service brought to the place from far and wide some fifty persons, mostly men. They assembled informally about the open porch of the cabin. After friendly greetings, Father Wolfgang told them with regrets that holy Mass could not be said. Yet he did not "send them away hungry." He blessed water and, reciting the familiar prayers, sprinkled them with it. Then, having read to them the Gospel of the Sunday, which records the Transfiguration, and alluding to the words of St. Peter, he said to them: "Let us build three tabernacles, one for the Divine Savior, one for each family, and one in the heart of each one of us." His sermon was based on this theme.

On the next day, March 18, the awaited box arrived. There also arrived a young man who introduced himself as Joseph Gruwe, born in Liesborn, Westphalia. A graduate of Bau Akademie, Berlin, he had emigrated to the United States and found work as draftsman for an architectural firm in Chicago. But amidst the noise and nervous bustle of the big city the ruins of an old Benedictine monastery in the town of his birth haunted his memory, and the thought of the *pax benedictina* that once had dwelt in that monastery ripened in him the vocation to the Benedictine form of life. In this resolution he was strengthened by the Reverend A. Wirtschoreck, a student friend of his from Germany and at that time Rector of the church in Freeburg, Illinois. Father Wirtschoreck told him to go to Logan County, Arkansas, where the Benedictines from St. Meinrad were to make a foundation. His counsel to young Gruwe may have been considerably motivated by the fact that he had purchased a good deal of property in Logan County. Since for an unpredictable period



ST. BENEDICT PRIORY, 1878. 1891, NEW SUBIACO ABBEY, ARKANSAS

of time there could be no Novitiate in the establishment, Gruwe, after only a brief visit in Arkansas, went on to St. Meinrad. After his Novitiate he was professed as Frater Luke on July 11, 1879.

On that March 18 Joseph Gruwe's first architectural achievement was the construction of an altar. He cut several saplings and with nails pulled out of the cabin nailed them together into trestles, which he placed under a tree, then laid a loose door over them. That was the first altar at St. Benedict's. Next morning, the feast of St. Joseph, the altar stone was laid on the door, the whole work was covered with the necessary linen cloths, and holy Mass was celebrated.

Prior Fintan rejoiced that the foundation was beginning in poverty and hardships. Father Wolfgang's spiritual cheerfulness and almost boyish buoyancy, coupled with his manly energy, were equal to the situation. Within less than two months and a half, on May 26, the first log church, St. Benedict—it measured 24 feet by 60 and had a tower about 50 feet high—was ready for the dedication.

Bishop Fitzgerald—a pioneer Bishop after Father Wolfgang's own heart—was delighted. He had braved the swollen Arkansas river and several creeks; he would not disappoint the monks and the faithful who had assembled despite the torrential rains that had fallen up until the previous night. Father Wolfgang had purposely put off holy Mass until eleven o'clock. When there still was no sign of the Bishop, he began to vest for Mass; just then a joyous "Hurrah!" made him look up. A spring wagon, which that morning had covered 25 miles, came racing from the woods. The Bishop, followed by two companions, lightly leaped from the wagon. After heartily greeting the people and Father Wolfgang, he doffed his besprinkled and bespattered traveling clothes, donned his pontificals, and was ready for a Solemn Mass. The musical Brother Hilary and a school-teacher formed the choir. The Bishop preached eloquently and long both at Mass and at Confirmation in the afternoon. "Thank God," wrote Father Wolfgang, "we now have what is first and most necessary—the house of God and the Divine Savior in the holy tabernacle."

Somebody had told Father Wolfgang that in Arkansas there would be no need for a stable for the livestock; but when the pigs

requisitioned the ground space beneath the log hut, and the mules bit the ropes apart to show they did not want to be tethered to a tree in all weather, he built a log stable to house the stock and also to store the coming harvest.

Father Wolfgang thought it well not to expend any money in repairing the miserable cabin because, with reinforcements coming, a bigger and more substantial house would be needed. St. Benedict Church had cost him \$800. He would devote the same amount to building St. Scholastica Church, at Shoal Creek, about twelve miles east of St. Benedict. The rest he would use for two schools with special living quarters for the Sisters. St. Scholastica Church, a duplicate of St. Benedict, was ready for divine service on the feast of the Assumption, but it was not solemnly dedicated by the Bishop until April 20 of the subsequent year.

Father Wolfgang next built at St. Benedict a log cabin school consisting of one schoolroom and three small rooms for the Sisters: a kitchen, a living room, and a bedroom. This building, too, was very primitive in structure and furnishings.

On September 21 of that year, Father Boniface Lübbermann and Brothers Gallus Graf and Martial Kraus arrived from St. Meinrad. Four Benedictine Sisters from Ferdinand, Indiana, also came: Sisters M. Xaveria Schröder, M. Bonaventure Wagner, M. Josepha Schmitt, and M. Isidora Lübbermann.

The Sisters had been warned to expect poverty and hardships, but, wrote Sister Bonaventure, "the reality far surpassed all that we had imagined." Those strong souls, however, were equal to the situation.

Since the school with the Sisters' rooms was not yet ready for occupation, the Fathers and Brothers for the time being turned their cabin over to the Sisters. In the sleeping room of the cabin the Sisters found bedsteads consisting of boards fastened to the walls and supported by one post resting on the floor. Meanwhile, the Fathers slept in the sacristy, and the four Brothers in the evening put a ladder to the church tower, climbed up to a small opening, crawled through

the opening into a little room and there spent the night: there were Brothers in the belfry.

It was only in December that the schoolroom, together with the living room, kitchen, and sleeping room for the Sisters, was ready for occupation.

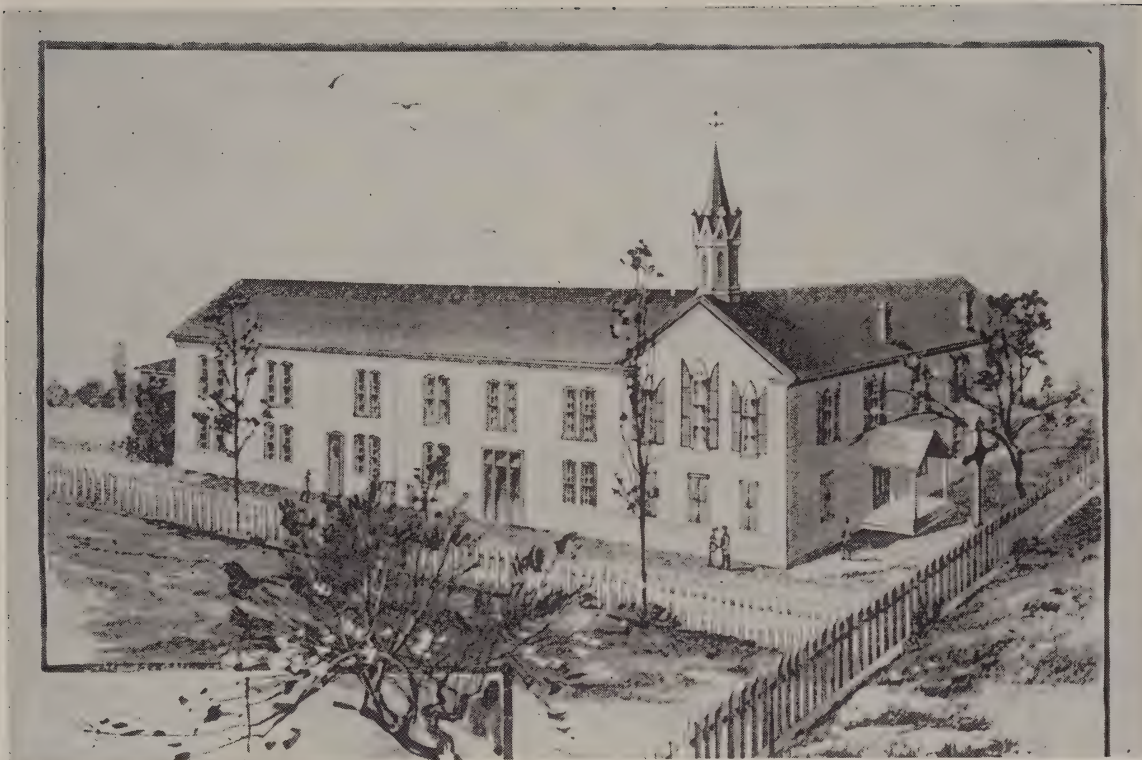
The central residence of the Sisters, however, was to be at St. Scholastica. On January 27, 1879, Sisters M. Xaveria and M. Bonaventure moved to St. Scholastica to start a school there; the other two did the same at St. Benedict.

Before a priest came to reside at St. Scholastica, the spiritual isolation of the Sisters was great. Father Wolfgang came on Sunday to say Mass and to preach; but he left on Monday morning. That left the Sisters without the Blessed Sacrament and without Holy Communion for the rest of the week.

There also were great physical hardships. There was neither well nor cistern on the place, but the children coming to school would each bring along a little water for the Sisters. After school the Sisters would with ax, saw, and wedge, enter the woods to fell trees, not only to clear the land for a garden, vineyard and field, but also to saw logs into sections. They split the sections into stove wood and carried them in their arms to the house. At first they had no bedsteads, but simply slept on the floor. It was Sister M. Josepha who got some boards from Dardanelle, in the adjacent county, and with simple tools at hand made bedsteads, tables, chairs, cupboards, and so forth.

When, in the summer of 1880, Sisters M. Xaveria and M. Bonaventure returned to Ferdinand, Sisters M. Scholastica Stockman (later for many years Prioress at Ferdinand), M. Juliana Karcher, and M. Ida Loehrlein, came to replace them. It was a strong generation of Sisters that laid the foundation for St. Scholastica convent.

Father Wolfgang was not a man who merely directed manual work; he led in it. Besides a number of distant missions that had to be taken care of, building had to be done, forests to be cleared, ground to be broken and cultivated, and so forth. The winter became quite severe. Father Wolfgang wrote: "During the second



ST. SCHOLASTICA CONVENT, SHOAL CREEK, ARKANSAS, 1879
Pen sketch, most likely by Fr. Luke Gruwe, O.S.B. Transferred to Fort Smith, 1925.

Mass on Christmas the Sacred Blood froze in the chalice. My hands and feet have broken chilblains. '*Benedicite, gelu et frigus, Domino.*' "

On September 25 Fathers Wolfgang and Boniface began to recite the Divine Office aloud "in choir."

A third church, St. Anthony, was built in 1879; in it, too, holy Mass was said for the first time on the feast of the Assumption.

Only after that did Brother Gall, a carpenter, build a much-needed house for the community. It was inhabitable by February, 1880.

All these works and other improvements were accomplished without contracting any debts; indeed, Father Wolfgang was under orders not to incur a debt. For that reason the buildings and their furnishings had to be limited temporarily to essentials.

Toward the end of 1879 Father Boniface and, in the earlier part of 1880, the four Brothers, who were greatly needed at the monastery, returned to St. Meinrad.

After Abbot Fintan had taken over in St. Meinrad, he laid the Arkansas project before the Chapter. Though the Chapter was in favor of continuing the foundation, the difficulty lay in the procurement of reinforcements. Though ordained only a short time before, Father Stephen Stenger was sent to St. Benedict in February, 1880, and on August 23 Fathers Benedict Brunet and Felix Rumpf also arrived there; but St. Meinrad looked more and more to Einsiedeln for help at St. Benedict.

In October, 1880, Father Bonaventure Binzegger, O.S.B., came from Einsiedeln to St. Meinrad, with the generous intention of devoting himself to the missions. Abbot Fintan thereupon decided to recall Father Wolfgang and to replace him with Father Bonaventure. Ready to work under the obedience of the new and considerably younger Superior, yet bowing to the will of his higher Superior, Father Wolfgang—this strong man of childlike obedience—wrote that he was happy to withdraw in the thought that after him "*omnia Bona ventura sunt.*" He was back at St. Meinrad on December 31,

where Abbot Fintan again made him Subprior, Kitchen Master, and Instructor of the Brothers.¹²

On November 13, 1882, the Abbot sent Father Wolfgang to Arkansas once more, this time to take care of the mission and the convent at St. Scholastica, where he again was spiritual Father and common laborer. In autumn, 1883, he became very sick with typhoid fever; his condition became so alarming that Father Bonaventure thought it advisable to administer the Sacraments of the Dying to him. "Despite all that," Father Wolfgang wrote later, "I did not yet believe that I was in danger of death. I thought just as old sinners usually think."

All difficulties notwithstanding, Abbot Fintan felt assured that the new foundation had a future. At the time, he experienced difficulty in finding the right man to be Superior. Instead of Father Bonaventure he installed the mild-mannered Father Benedict for a while.

In the summer of 1884, Father Wolfgang made a visit to Einsiedeln. From there he returned to St. Meinrad; but Father Matthew Sättele and Brother Aloys Zäch, from Einsiedeln, and some candidates went directly to Arkansas. On March 12, 1885, Abbot Fintan made another visit to the young foundation, bringing along Father Wolfgang, whom he again installed as Prior.

The situation grew somewhat precarious during the stay of Father Vincent Wehrle, O.S.B., at St. Benedict. Very soon after his priestly ordination at Einsiedeln on April 23, 1882, he had come to St. Meinrad on October 9. Though for the time being Father Vincent was placed under obedience to Abbot Fintan, he did not cease to be a Capitular of Einsiedeln. Abbot Fintan assigned him to the foundation in Arkansas in the summer of 1883.

Father Vincent was gifted in many ways and displayed much zeal; but he found it hard to subject his judgment to that of his elders. Chagrined at the humble beginning of St. Benedict and convinced that it had no future, he strongly agitated against its con-

¹² St. M. Ll. VII, p. 859 (Fr. Wolfgang to the Dean of Eins., Dec. 12, 1880); IX. p. 1079 (Abbot Fintan to the Dean, Jan. 10, 1881).

tinuance. For that reason the Abbot recalled him to St. Meinrad and made him Assistant to Father Fidelis, at St. Joseph Church, Jasper, and, when the young Father Vincent thought that Jasper was too narrow a field for him, the Abbot, in 1887, sent him to Bishop Marty, in Dakota.¹³

Next, Abbot Fintan judged that St. Benedict should be made a canonically established Conventual Priory. When in Rome for the transaction of various affairs, in January, 1886, he petitioned the Holy See to grant him the faculty necessary to accomplish this. A rescript dated April 25, 1886, granted his petition. A second rescript, of the same date, permitted the opening of a Novitiate in the Priory. A third rescript, May 16, 1886, granted a sanation of Novitiate and, if necessary, of Simple Vows made previous to the canonical erection of the Priory.¹⁴

These steps were indicative of a healthy growth. Indeed, in 1886, Bishop Fitzgerald, who in that year had again visited the Priory and the territory under its care, wrote to Abbot Fintan and called the progress "miraculous."

Though the foundation was being made from St. Meinrad, Abbot Fintan was intent upon procuring for it as many men as possible from Einsiedeln because St. Meinrad was scarcely able to spare any more men for this purpose. Nor were these efforts in vain. Several Fathers and one Brother had already come from Einsiedeln. Finally, on October 9, 1887, there arrived at St. Benedict Father Gall D'Aujourd'hui, O.S.B., with eight students—subsequently called "the Eight Beatitudes"—directly from Einsiedeln. Now both a monastic school and, as Candidates would be ripe for it, a Canonical Novitiate could be opened. Father Wolfgang put Father Gall at the head of both.

Before long the requisites for having the Priory raised to the status of an Abbey seemed to be met sufficiently and Abbot Fintan

¹³ St. M. Ll. VII, pp. 869, 873. (Fr. Matthew to the Dean of Eins., July 24, 1885; Fr. Wolfgang to the same [July 24, 1885]; Aug. 1, 1885; Sept. 8, 1885).

¹⁴ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *New Subiaco Abbey, Arkansas*.

began to take steps to that effect. But then an incident occurred that retarded the process. The ten Fraters, who as yet were not even Solemnly Professed—among them “the Eight Beatitudes”—sent Abbot Fintan a lengthy petition (July 9, 1889) that he should never think of giving them as Abbot Father Wolfgang but rather one who would be to them “an energetic and loving father” namely “Father Gall;” Father Gall, so they pointed out to the Abbot, had the necessary qualifications, moral, intellectual, and administrative. According to the petitioners, the good and peace of the community demanded that their petition be heeded. What, according to Abbot Fintan, chiefly displeased them in Father Wolfgang was a sort of strictness and a lack of sufficient considerateness of frailties, and his manner of managing the farm and of building.¹⁵

The petition must have been very embarrassing to Father Gall, the Instructor of the Fraters. In a letter to Abbot Fintan, dated January 30, 1891, he called the “views” which were laid before him during his visit to St. Benedict, in 1889, “immature”; he “humbly and sincerely” begged him to forget all their failings of two years ago; he assured him that the sentiment regarding Father Wolfgang had changed thoroughly and that the wishes of all would be met if Father Wolfgang would be recommended to Rome as the first Abbot of St. Benedict.¹⁶

On July 18, 1891, Abbot Fintan, seeing the way clear, sent to the Holy See his petition that St. Benedict Priory be erected an Abbey, with the title “Subiaco.” (The change of title was motivated by the existence of a St. Benedict Abbey in the neighboring state of Kansas.) This petition was laid before the Holy Father on August 2 and was immediately granted by him; the Decree of Erection was issued by the Propaganda on August 11. But since Abbot Fintan had perhaps

¹⁵ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *New Subiaco Abbey*; St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1102 (Abbot Fintan to the Dean, July 14, 1889); VII, pp. 889-890 (Father Wolfgang to the Dean, July 14, 1889).

¹⁶ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *New Subiaco Abbey, Arkansas*; folder, *R. P. Ildephonsus Hürlimann* (P. Ildephons to Abbot Fintan, Aug. 8, 1889; Feb. 22, 1891).

intentionally not proposed anyone as first Abbot and the Holy See had neither appointed one nor determined how he was to be elected, and since the Constitutions of the Swiss-American Congregation contained no provision for such an act, Abbot Fintan sent a new petition, asking for an indult enabling him to preside at that election. The indult was granted on February 4, 1892.¹⁷

At that very time a transaction took place that at its beginning seemed quite irrelevant to the events here narrated but which eventually proved to be an exquisite factor in the working of Divine Providence in regard to Subiaco. Father Ignatius Conrad, O.S.B., Capitular of Einsiedeln and brother of Abbot Frowin, urged by the Bishop of Kansas City, Missouri, had on February 9 purchased Christian University, in Nevada, Missouri, for \$11,000. He thought it an excellent bargain. Conception Abbey had a college of its own and could not spare men for another. Subiaco was thought to be too far removed from populated areas to have a successful college on its grounds. And so the education-minded members of Subiaco, when approached by Father Ignatius about the Nevada school, enthusiastically entered upon the project. Father Ignatius had one of the young Fathers come to him to learn English and two others to Conception to learn "the methods of English-American teaching." When these three Fathers were summoned to Subiaco for the election of an Abbot, Father Ignatius accompanied them. This would be a splendid opportunity for conferring with the new Abbot about—as they all believed—the magnificent prospects at Nevada.¹⁸

The election was held on March 24. Since Father Ignatius was conveniently at hand, Abbot Fintan appointed him to attend the election as one of the two witnesses required. Not a Capitular of Subiaco, Father Ignatius had, of course, no vote. But it was he, an innocent bystander, who on the first ballot was elected the first

¹⁷ These documents (the decree of erection to the status of an abbey is found only in authentic copy) are in the St. Meinrad Archabbey archives; St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1108 (Abbot Fintan to the Dean of Eins., Aug. 27, 1891).

¹⁸ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Rt. Rev. Ignatius Conrad, O.S.B.* (Fr. Ignatius to Abbot Fintan, Feb. 11, 1892).

Abbot of Subiaco. And, wrote Abbot Fintan, "Father Wolfgang is in the best humor."¹⁹ It may here be noted that the college at Nevada did not become a reality; yet this *fata morgana* had served its providential purpose for Subiaco.

In those years requests for foundations came from several other states, such as Colorado, California, and Illinois. But experience from the extensive mission fields in Dakota and from the foundation in Arkansas prompted Abbot Fintan to write on November 7, 1881:

By reason of the experience that we have made in the last years, my ardor as to colonies has cooled. I am of the opinion that we should not start one before we have grown strong within and without and have a sufficient number of proved and solid religious from which to select without harm to their own salvation and without detriment to the house; otherwise the undertakings will not do well. Then, too, above all considerations, there should be unmistakable indications from above from which one can discern that God wills us to be at a place that He has destined. If we ourselves look for places instead of having Providence as it were push us into them, there is danger that we may settle somewhere from which we can no longer find the way back, like the raven from out of Noe's ark.²⁰

In 1883 Bishop Peter Baltes, of Springfield, Illinois, requested St. Meinrad's Abbey to take over the pastorate of St. Peter Church, Belleville, Illinois. The congregation consisted of about 1,300 families. Besides other difficulties at St. Peter's, there had for a number of years been some tension between the pastor and the Bishop. The people sided with the pastor. The situation finally prompted the Bishop to ask St. Meinrad to take over the pastorate and to invite the Abbey to make a foundation either in Belleville or in Springfield itself. Abbot Fintan was not in favor of taking on this new

¹⁹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Dean Ildephons, *Einsiedeln*, to Abbot Fintan, Nov. 3, 1891. March 17, 1892); S. M. Ll. IX, p. 1110 (Abbot Fintan to the Dean of Eins., March 26, 1892).

²⁰ Conception Abbey archives (Abbot Fintan to Abbot Frowin, Nov. 7, 1881).

work; but the Chapter advocated accepting the pastorate in Belleville tentatively for at least six to eight years.

Three Fathers were to take over St. Peter Church on September 1, 1883. Abbot Fintan went there on August 6 to view the situation. To afford Father Luke the joy of a visit with his former fellow student, Father Wirtschoreck, whose parish was adjacent to Belleville, the Abbot had him accompany him on this trip. Acceding to the Bishop's urgent request, the Abbot allowed Father Luke to assume pastoral work at once. The two other Fathers and two Brothers arrived in due time.

As might be expected under the circumstances, the parish in general at first let the Fathers feel that they were not welcome; it took about seven months for this situation to change. On April 4, 1884, Bishop Baltes, answering Father Stephen's request for a certain faculty, added: "I am fully aware that the Fathers are doing well at Belleville, and that the most of those who ever did or said anything against them are heartily ashamed of it."²¹

But when the Diocese of Belleville had been erected and the Right Reverend John Janssen was consecrated its first Bishop on April 25, 1888, with St. Peter Church as his cathedral, the Benedictines could return to their monastery with the realization that their Good Samaritan work was accomplished. Abbot Fintan wrote: "Last week I was in Belleville at the consecration of the Bishop and I took our Fathers and Brothers home from there, since St. Peter Church now is the cathedral, and we have come to the conclusion not to make a foundation there. The people were most reluctant to see us depart."²²

Early in March, 1889, Abbot Fintan paid a second visit to St. Leo parish and the missions in Acadia Parish, Louisiana. He was so well impressed with the religious and economic possibilities of that region that he thought it a promising place for a foundation. But when in New Orleans to confer with Archbishop Janssens about these missions, the Archbishop and the Reverend John B. Bogaerts, who

²¹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *St. Peter Church, Belleville*.

²² St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1099 (Abbot Fintan to the Dean of Eins., May 3, 1888).

shortly thereafter was made Vicar General, recommended to him another place as more advantageous for a monastic foundation.

Father Bogaerts had, in 1888, purchased approximately 2,000 acres of land, situated on the two sides of the Natalbany River, partly in Tangipahoa and partly in Livingston Parish. This place was only 50 miles north of New Orleans. About 50 acres of that land were cleared; the rest of the land was forest. Some buildings and a somewhat neglected sawmill were on the property. He offered the entire site to the Abbot for \$9,000; eventually he brought the price down to \$8,000. The Archbishop, on his part, promised to turn over to the Benedictines the missions at Amite City and at Ponchatoula, in Tangipahoa Parish, and St. Joseph mission in Livingston Parish. To these missions, which the Archbishop called very poor, he added St. Boniface parish in the city of New Orleans; besides being a poor parish, St. Boniface had a debt of \$5,800. The Archbishop wanted the Benedictines to found a monastery in that mission district and also to open a protectory for boys.

The Abbot felt favorably disposed toward the offer. On March 12, 1889, after his return to St. Meinrad, he acquainted the Fathers with the proposition. All in all, their opinion was favorable. The Abbot accordingly sent Father Benno Gerber, O.S.B., to inspect the land. He instructed him to conclude the deal, provided the quality of the land was up to expectation.

With regard to the manner of payment, St. Meinrad Abbey was ready to pay \$1,000 down. Seven promissory notes of \$1,000 each, at 5% interest, would cover the balance of the sum. The plan would be to redeem one note each year.

As it turned out, however, Father Benno was not well impressed with the land. It was, Father Benno observed, largely swampy, hardly a wholesome place to live in. And so he returned to St. Meinrad without having made any move toward purchasing the land. His unfavorable report on the land changed the opinion of some of the Fathers who had previously approved the proposition.

Informed of the new attitude of the Abbey toward buying the land, Father Bogaerts wrote quite tartly to the Abbot and asserted

that the Abbot would have to consider himself bound to accept the land because of his earlier expression of willingness to conclude the deal. This stand of Father Bogaerts was obviously unreasonable.

But in spite of Father Benno's report, Father Luke Gruwe, O.S.B., was willing to undertake the new foundation. The Abbot sent him to investigate the situation. Father Luke arrived in New Orleans on December 20, 1889.²³

On the following day Father Bogaerts and he called on the Archbishop. Father Luke found both enthusiastic over the project; the Archbishop no longer mentioned the boys' protectory but rather emphasized that the Benedictines should at their own expense build a Provincial Minor Seminary, something badly needed there for the development of priestly vocations.

On December 23 Father Bogaerts took Father Luke out to look at the property. Father Luke was of the impression that the land was very good in every regard, and he reported as much to the Abbot and urged him to go ahead with the deal.

On January 13, 1890, the Fathers who were the "Directors of St. Meinrad's Abbey, Incorporated," authorized Abbot Fintan to buy the land. Abbot Fintan, in turn, conferred powers of attorney upon the Reverend Joseph Koegerl, pastor of St. Boniface Church, New Orleans, to make the purchase legally.²⁴ Father Koegerl strongly advocated the transaction; he himself was willing to resign his parish in favor of the Benedictines. And so, on January 20, the transfer of the property was formally made.

Anticipating the formality of this transfer, three Brothers, Kilian Gessner, Matthew Stamm, and Thaddeus Hoelzle, had arrived and had, under the leadership of Father Luke, taken over the site.²⁵ Father Leander Roth arrived in December, 1890; Father Columban

²³ From that time on until his return to St. Meinrad, in 1903, Father Luke in regular correspondence kept the Abbot informed about the new foundation. St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Rev. Luke Gruwe, O.S.B., St. Joseph's Abbey, La.* See also correspondence with Fr. Bogaerts.

²⁴ *Minutes of the Meetings of the Board of Corporation.* Pages 8-12.

²⁵ Fr. Luke to Abbot Fintan, Jan. 18, 1890.

Wenzel, on September 4, 1891; and Father Gallus Anderau, on November 17, 1891. Father Luke called the new foundation St. Joseph.²⁶

When, in 1892, Father Luke applied for a Post Office at the monastery—Ponchatoula, the nearest Post Office, was five miles distant—he proposed the name Gessen, and the Post Office Department granted the name. Writing to the Abbot, he gave his reason for the new name: "It is Joseph's land, and there already is a St. Joseph in Louisiana."²⁷ The name of the monastery, however, has happily remained St. Joseph.

The Archbishop, on his part, on March 7, 1890, in due form obtained from the Holy See the permission to hand over to the Benedictines the conducting of the Preparatory Seminary and the three "very poor" missions and "St. Boniface parish with its debt of \$5,800, to be paid by them."

With this grant at hand Abbot Fintan petitioned the Holy See for permission to erect the new monastery with its own Novitiate. All this the Holy See granted on January 25, 1891. Abbot Fintan appointed Father Luke Prior of St. Joseph Priory. Finally, on November 6, 1894, St. Meinrad conveyed and warranted the whole property to the new monastery.

The Preparatory Seminary was opened on September 3, 1891, with an attendance of ten students; six more arrived during the course of the scholastic year. Father Columban was the Rector. In 1892 there was an initial enrollment of twenty-four students.

During the first four or five years of this foundation there were times so trying that a heart spiritually less disciplined than that of Father Luke might have lost courage; the community occasionally felt the pinch of poverty, and usually the amount of work was beyond its strength. From March 2 to April 28, 1892, they had meat "only three or four times." Eggs from their poultry yard, vegetables from their garden and little farm, and preparations from flour were their regular fare. "We speak truthfully," wrote Father Luke, "when we

²⁶ The same, Jan. 31, 1891. ²⁷ Nov. 12, 1892.

pray, '*edent pauperes.*'"²⁸ The community sometimes had fish, thanks to Brother Mark Michel who arrived from St. Meinrad on September 19, 1892. Brother Mark's fishing expeditions brought a supply of channel catfish to the community. Ten-pound catfish were not rare, and once Brother Mark caught a 25-pound fish.

Father Luke had a 34-hour teaching schedule in the school. He also managed the affairs of the community, worked in the missions, gave retreats, and was confessor to several communities of Sisters.²⁹ It was regrettable that by reason of its many commitments St. Meinrad could not send a greater number of duly qualified men.

By 1900, the community of St. Joseph Priory was convinced that Gessen was not so suitable for the monastery; it was a disadvantage for the school to be so far removed from the city, and the surroundings were after all found to be too swampy and unwholesome. Therefore, on November 21, 1901, 1200 acres of land near Covington, in St. Tammany Parish, were bought for \$5,000. On December 17 two Brothers and one Father, driving two teams hitched to wagons loaded with the necessary furniture and implements, moved into the new place. Father Ildephons Zarn was to be the local superior;³⁰ the others followed later.

A feeling had gradually grown in the community that the burden of being the Prior ought to rest on shoulders other than those of Father Luke. It was hard for this feeling to recommend appropriate action to the Abbot. Of all the Fathers, Father Luke, besides being a good religious, was outstanding as a man of culture. In his contacts with prelates, priests, and the laity, he commanded respect. But his habitual forgetfulness could be very embarrassing, and both the religious observance and the economic welfare of the community suffered because of it. Then, too, his somewhat cutting temper and his personal ascetical rigor at times brought him to be rather harsh toward others.

In April, 1902, Abbot Athanasius appointed Father Paul Schaeu-

²⁸ To Abbot Fintan, Apr. 28, 1892.

²⁹ To Abbot Fintan, Oct. 18, 1893.

³⁰ Fr. Luke to Abbot Athanasius, Nov. 21; Dec. 15, 1901.



ST. JOSEPH PRIORY, GESSEN P.O., LOUISIANA, 1890;
Transferred to St. Benedict P.O., 1900. Abbey, 1903. Architect of Priory Building,
Prior Luke Gruwe, O.S.B.

ble, O.S.B., Prior and, in 1903, recalled Father Luke to St. Meinrad, though the community of St. Joseph much desired to retain him as one of their members.

Pope Leo XIII on June 30, 1903, granted the petition of Abbot Athanasius and the General Chapter of the Swiss-American Congregation, raising St. Joseph's Priory to the status of an Abbey. The Holy Father appointed Father Paul Schaeuble its first Abbot.³¹

Father Paul, notified by the president of the congregation, wrote to Abbot Athanasius: "The Lord Abbot Frowin wrote to me that I have been appointed Abbot—*Miserere Mei, Deus.*" The prayer was a well-chosen one, inasmuch as for many years St. Joseph's Abbey was to continue on the way of the cross.³²

Toward the end of December, 1889, Abbot Fintan was surprised to receive an inquiry from the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Affairs, Rome, with regard to whether the Swiss-American Congregation was willing and able to send a German-speaking priest to take over the care of souls in Nueva Helvecia in the Diocese of Montevideo, Uruguay, South America; a colony of Swiss there had petitioned the Holy See for such a priest. The colonists would give the priest a monthly salary of 50 scudi and a convenient dwelling.³³

On January 2, 1890, Abbot Fintan acquainted the Bishop of Montevideo with this inquiry from Rome and requested further information to enable him to make the proper decision.

Marianus Soler, at that time the Administrator of the Diocese and before long its next Bishop, under date of February 19 requested the Reverend David Buletti, within whose extensive parish of Rosario the colony lay, to send him information about the petition. (In view of the fact that the colony had for about 20 years made such petitions it is strange that the Chancery knew nothing about this one.)

³¹ Abbot Athanasius' authentic copy of the decree, St. M. Archabbey archives, drawer 9, folder, *St. Joseph's Abbey, La.*

³² Aug. 19, 1903.

³³ The documents and the correspondence pertaining to this attempt at a foundation are in the archives of St. Meinrad Archabbey, drawer 9, folder, *Uruguay, Nueva Helvecia.*

On February 24 Father Buletti wrote the Administrator that these colonists—about 200 families, half of whom were Catholics, the rest Protestants—had some 30 years ago come from various parts of Switzerland; some spoke German, others French, others Italian; there were, too, many native Uruguayans in the far-flung district. Some of the German-speaking Catholics had formed a corporation, built a church and a combination of school and dwelling and set apart 10,000 square meters of very fertile land, which amounted to not quite two and one half acres. The ownership of all this they were ready to convey to the Benedictines if the monks would permanently obligate themselves to take over the spiritual care of the colonists. Moreover, he felt confident in saying that these Catholics were ready to pay a monthly salary of 200 French francs until such time that the needs of the priest—or the priests—would be provided for in some other way. Father Buletti added that two priests would be needed to undertake this vast work in a district that extended from 30 to 40 miles.

With this information at hand, Abbot Fintan wrote to the Sacred Congregation that he would comply with the request by sending a priest to Uruguay and asked the blessing of the Holy Father. In reply, on May 17, 1890, Cardinal Rampolla no longer spoke of merely one but of several religious to be sent.

Abbot Fintan selected Fathers Cyrin Thomas and Nazar Werner for what he intended to be a new monastic foundation. The journey from Newport News, Virginia, to Nuevo Helvecia took 33 days. They arrived at Nueva Helvecia on December 17, 1890.

Father Cyrin soon gained the impression that religious life in Uruguay was in an appalling state. There were no days of fast and abstinence—not even on Good Friday, they were told. There were few church marriages; people would simply go to the Justice of the Peace. If the pastor was called to a sick person at an hour of the day that he judged to be too late, especially if the sick person lived at a distance, the answer could be expected that they should call next morning if the patient was still alive. With regard to funerals, people would simply take a corpse to the *campo santo* and bury it.

The Auxiliary Bishop and his companions came to Nueva Helvecia to conduct a three-day mission for the Spanish-speaking Uruguayans and to confirm. The sacraments of Confirmation and of Penance, were administered by the prelate in an incredibly informal—one might say irreverent—manner, judging from Father Cyrin's account of the unceremonious ceremonies. Father Cyrin felt exasperated at the "talking and chatting" of the natives, "portly matrons leaning their 'sacred' elbows upon the *mensa altaris*," and the prelate hurrying around lightly, in words and demeanor fitting into the scene.

All that might have served the missionaries merely as a challenge to their zeal, for here was surely room for patient work. But they soon noticed that the way things were shaping up, the foundation of a Benedictine monastery was out of question. At first they were considered to be merely "*capellanes*"—Assistants—to Father Buletti, who lived miles away from them, dependent on him in all things. They opened a school for children, but they were told that they might teach only boys, though the pastor hired a woman teacher for both boys and girls; by reason of this discrimination that teacher boasted that she ranked higher than the Fathers. After some time the people raised difficulty about paying the promised salary; yet the Fathers had practically no other income.

When Father Cyrin laid the situation before the Bishop, the latter decided to erect what the Chancery called a *Vice-Parroquia*, to be entrusted to the Fathers. But in view of this arrangement the Bishop, seconded by Father Buletti, demanded that the church, the house, and the property, which the group of German Swiss had promised to give the Fathers for the benefit of the foundation, be turned over to the Diocese. This change eliminated a monastic foundation which, naturally, would have to be made on property belonging to the monastery. Without a monastery in the region, eventual replacements would always have to be made from St. Meinrad; besides being very expensive, it would take about three months to make a replacement. Then, too, Father Cyrin felt that the Diocesan clergy were rather distant toward them.

These and similar factors taken together prompted Father Cyrin to request the Abbot to recall him at once from this mission, whereas Father Nazar declared his willingness to remain until two other Fathers and a Brother would arrive, in case St. Meinrad was resolved to continue in that field of work.

With this information at hand, Abbot Fintan on December 19, 1891, informed the Bishop of Montevideo that since the situation in Nueva Helvecia had now changed to such an extent that, on the one hand, the making of a permanent foundation was not feasible and, on the other hand, it would be too inconvenient and expensive constantly to send missionaries for the ordinary mission service in so distant a Diocese, he had no choice but to recall his monks. They sailed from Montevideo on March 6, 1892, and returned to St. Meinrad.

Thirty-seven years later, Father Nazar expressed the opinion that both he and Father Cyrin were also at fault in the failure of this mission. "We did not at that time have the true missionary spirit." The acknowledgment may be valid with regard to the lack of persevering patience in mission life under special difficulties, but it would seem that even a stronger mission spirit would not have been able to make a permanent monastic foundation under the prevailing conditions; and that is what Abbot Fintan had in mind when he acted in conformity with their request that he recall them.—Several years after their return, both obtained a papal indult of secularization, whereupon they served in the Diocese of Louisville.

The Brief with which the Holy See raised St. Meinrad to the status of an Abbey decreed that the monks joined to it or thereafter to be joined to it should "coalesce" into a special congregation of the Order of St. Benedict, under the title, "the Swiss-American Congregation," affiliated with the Swiss-Benedictine Congregation and ruled, along with the common Rule of St. Benedict, according to the Constitutions of the mother congregation.

When, on April 5, 1881, Pope Leo XIII raised New Engelberg to the rank of an Abbey, he at the same time decreed that the two Abbeys were to form an independent congregation and that the monks of these monasteries and of the monasteries that in future would be

founded by them should be united as a congregation—the Swiss-American—even as the monasteries of the Swiss-Benedictine Congregation, with which they were to be affiliated, were united. Further, the Pope appointed Abbot Fintan of St. Meinrad “the first Abbot General” of the Swiss-American Congregation.³⁴ Later, when Abbot Fintan found that in the Swiss Congregation the Abbot at the head of it was called “Abbot President,” that title was adopted also in the Swiss-American Congregation inasmuch as it seemed to be more expressive of the autonomy of each monastery.

The pioneers of St Meinrad's Abbey had ordered their life in accordance with the special Statutes that the Abbot of Einsiedeln had laid down for them together with the *Notae et Observationes in Regulam Ssmi Patris Nostri Benedicti pro Uniformitate Monasteriorum Congregationis Helveto-Benedictinae*, according to which they had lived at Einsiedeln. The Swiss-Benedictine Congregation had adopted these *Notae* in 1636 and had revised them in 1748 and again in 1869. The *Notae* are a short explanation and adaptation of the Holy Rule, chapter by chapter.

The erection of New Engelberg (Conception) Abbey and the concomitant establishment of the Swiss-American Congregation, and, finally, an act of the first General Chapter, in 1885, became for Abbot Fintan new incentives to draw up some proximate norm of life for this congregation. Like Father Isidor, he was of course well acquainted with the monastic life according to the *Notae* as observed at Einsiedeln. In December, 1883, he received a copy of the Statutes of the Maredsous Monastery. He found many points in them that pleased him, but he also realized that, since Maredsous had neither schools nor missions, its statutes could not be a perfect pattern for the life of the Swiss-American Congregation.³⁵ In general Abbot Frowin leaned somewhat toward Beuron, whereas the Einsiedeln Fathers at St. Meinrad strongly favored the Einsiedeln usages

³⁴ Copy of the decree in St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (the original is at Conception); other decrees, originals or copies, concerning the congregation, its statutes and constitutions, are at St. Meinrad.

³⁵ Abbot Fintan to Abbot Frowin, Dec. 6, 1883.

except where these were at variance with the somewhat stricter tendency at St. Meinrad.

Abbot Fintan worked for several years on a new version of the *Notae et Observationes*; but he progressed slowly, overburdened as he was with other tasks. Though he retained the title and the spirit of the old *Notae et Observationes*, he adapted the regulations of the Swiss work to the needs of the Swiss-American Congregation. He finally sent the manuscript to Abbot Frowin for further suggestions and upon its return handed to the St. Meinrad Abbey Printing Press the *Notae et Observationes in Regulam SS. P. N. Benedicti pro Uniformitate Monasteriorum Congregationis Helveto-Benedictinae sub Patrocinio B. M. V. Immac. Conceptionis Anno 1886 die festo Immaculatae Conceptionis B. M. V. ab Abbatibus Congregationis Helveto-Americanae conditionibus Americae septentrionalis adaptatae*. Even when the work of printing had begun, the progress was slow because the cases held enough letters for a form of only four pages of a small duodecimo format. After the printing of each form the letters had to be distributed before the next galley could be set. The last form was ready for printing on March 9, 1887.

In 1891 Abbot Fintan sent this version of the *Notae* to the Propaganda for approval; but the Sacred Congregation took no action just then. Later, on April 6, 1893, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation inquired of Abbot Fintan whether he still was of the same mind as to the *Notae* and asked about the opinion of the Chapter members of the Congregation with regard to the approval of the statutes. Inasmuch as it revealed the mind of the Sacred Congregation, the inquiry about the opinion of the monks in regard to the contents of the statutes was significant. Meanwhile, the Abbots of the Congregation, assembled for their second General Chapter, in May, 1892, enacted that Constitutions be drawn up in the form of "Declarations" to be added to whatever chapters of the Holy Rule needed special attention.

The *Notae* from Switzerland contained nothing about the organization and functioning of the Swiss-Benedictine Congregation; hence Abbot Fintan, too, unacquainted with the procedures, had

nothing about these points in his adaptation of the *Notae* for the Swiss-American Congregation. But he inquired from Einsiedeln about the matter and received the necessary information toward the end of October, 1892.³⁶ Thereupon, setting aside the *Notae* of the Swiss-Benedictine Congregation, he drew up a completely new work, *Constitutiones & Sacrae Regulae Declarationes*, in which he interspersed at the appropriate places of the *Declarationes* the various points pertaining to the organization and functioning of the Congregation. On March 12, 1894, the Propaganda approved giving this version a trial for three years.³⁷ Upon a petition to have this version approved for another trial term of three years, the Propaganda answered affirmatively on March 31, 1897.³⁸ At the end of that period the Abbots submitted the work, with some changes, for final approbation. Approbation was granted on February 9, 1901.

Just as some of the Chapter Members objected that they had not had the opportunity to present their opinions when Abbot Fintan first submitted to Rome his *Notae et Observationes*, so there was a similar feeling among some of the Fathers at St. Meinrad when the Constitutions and Declarations, with changes and additions, were submitted for final approbation. At that time, Abbot Frowin of Conception was the President of the Congregation.

Finally, with the promulgation of the *Code of Canon Law*, in 1917, a new revision became imperative. In this revision, made by Abbot Fintan's successor, the *Declarations on the Holy Rule*, which regulate the monastic observance in the individual monasteries of the Congregation, were happily completely separated from the *Constitutions*, which regulate the organization and the functioning of the Congregation as such. This revision was approved on September 9, 1924.

Previous to the time of Abbot Fintan, St. Meinrad used the Einsiedeln *Directorium*. On February 1, 1872, Abbot Martin had even

³⁶ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Ildephonsus Hürlimann* (P. Aemilian Rosenberger, O.S.B., Oct. 7, 1891).

³⁷ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (decree, March 12, 1894).

³⁸ *Ibid.* (decree, March 31, 1897).

obtained for St. Meinrad a formal approval to use the Einsiedeln *Calendarium*.³⁹ But Abbot Fintan was intent upon procuring for St. Meinrad and the Swiss-American Congregation a proper *Calendarium*. Much of this work devolved upon Father Isidor, the rubricist. It took several years of correspondence until the Holy See, on July 24, 1884, granted a special, perpetual *Calendarium* for the Swiss-American Congregation; it was forwarded to Abbot Fintan on September 1.⁴⁰ St. Meinrad at once set to work to print, for the year 1885, its first *Directorium pro Divino Officio Persolvendo, Sacroque Celebrando Juxta Rubricas Breviarii Monastici Missalisque Romani . . . Juxta Kalen. Die 24 Julii, 1884, Approb. . .*

Once these important factors rested on a canonical basis, monastic life could develop in a secure and orderly manner.

The task of providing the Swiss-American Congregation with Constitutions had scarcely been begun, and that of having its own *Calendarium* and *Directorium* had just been finished, when St. Meinrad came near to being subjected to a great loss. On November 30, 1886, Abbot Romaric Flugi, the Procurator General of the Benedictine Order, wrote from Rome to Abbot Basil, of Einsiedeln,⁴¹ that he should furnish "a thoroughly reliable and in every regard comprehensive information about the scientific education, moral and priestly qualities, character and circumspection and prudence in ruling" of Abbot Fintan, "who has been proposed for the Diocese to be erected in Nebraska." Abbot Basil answered on December 2, that throughout his preparatory studies Abbot Fintan nearly always had held the first place; that throughout his philosophical and theological course he was, though not gifted with outstanding talent, held in the highest esteem by his professors. "In regard to morals, he, as a student, was for all an exemplar of modesty, purity of life, obedience, piety, and meekness; as a religious, he seems to have brought to

³⁹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (copy of the decree).

⁴⁰ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (the petition, May 19, 1883; notification of mailing of the grant, Sept. 1, 1884).

⁴¹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 2, folder, *Fintan Mundwiler (II Abbas)* (letters of Abbots Romaric and Basil).

perfection what he had begun in youth. It can truly be said that he was the joy and solace of all superiors." Abbot Basil next praised Abbot Fintan's zeal in the care of souls, then continued: "We are less acquainted with his ability in ruling because our immediate knowledge of him was limited to his most prompt obedience in our midst; yet this much we do know of his ability to rule: in the government of his monastery he is solicitous to draw souls by truly paternal love. And this is the reason why your letter has caused me fright rather than joy, because it is much to be feared that, deprived of such a Father, the monastery of St. Meinrad will without doubt suffer great harm, especially since in that but recently founded monastery there are to be found but few priests capable of bearing the dignity and burden of an abbot."—The assumption seems to be justified that this implied plea of Abbot Basil was the reason why Abbot Fintan was not taken from his monastery to be made the first Bishop of the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska (established August 2, 1887).

CHAPTER XI

THE DESTRUCTION BY FIRE, 1887. RECONSTRUCTION. A SACRED FIRE—THE PRIESTS' EUCHARISTIC LEAGUE

ON OCTOBER 5, 1878, as the students came out of the old church, they saw fire on the south end of the roof of the Abbey. They ran up to the main building and gave the alarm. Prompt action succeeded in putting out the fire. It was found that the kitchen chimney was defective. The necessary repairs were made, yet perhaps not with lasting effect. Ever thereafter, some of the Fathers feared the possibility of another fire; they feared that not enough precautions were being taken.

The Abbey was, indeed, insured; but the insurance company broke up, involving the Abbey in court trials and difficulties. Thereupon the Abbot negotiated with another fire insurance company, but before he could come up to all the requirements stipulated by it, the blow that some had feared fell.

For thirty-three years the pioneers had worked hard in swamp and field, in forest and quarry, in church and school. After years of privations, of toil and sweat, the monumental stone building raised its gables over the wondering forest. The monks' hearts beat high as within those majestic walls they chanted the divine praises, taught young men both natural and sacred sciences, in keeping with the rhythmic beat of monastic life.

On Friday forenoon, September 2, 1887, the community concluded the annual retreat, as a spiritual preparation for the opening

of the scholastic year. At noon of that very day, as the community had just sat down to dinner, the shrill cry, "Fire!" suddenly pierced the air and every heart. Fierce flames raced through the corridors, broke through the roof, then leaped skyward, taking with them the toil of all those years. Within less than two hours the window openings—black holes in the gutted massive building—stared into space.

The summer had been exceptionally dry, and, furthermore, on that fatal September 2, there was a strong wind from the south. Again it was a student, who chanced to be in the garret near where the fire started, who first noticed it; but by the time he ran to fetch a bucket of water and to sound the alarm the fire had gained headway not only in the garret but had worked its way through the roof where the wind whipped the flames northward and westward over the sun-parched shingles. A seminarian, who had spent his vacation at the Abbey, ran to the bell tower to spread the alarm abroad.

The community, as yet unaware of the situation overhead, tried with buckets of water to put out the fire in the garret; but the people who came running from the town and the farms and saw the flames rushing across the roof knew that the building was doomed. They ran into the monastery and called out to the monks: "Save what is to be saved, for the monastery is lost!" and, unasked, set to work to take out of the crypt whatever they could—even over the remonstrance of the Fathers and Brothers who, concentrating their efforts on the garret, still failed to grasp the dreadful seriousness of the menace from overhead. Some even chided Brother Kilian for taking the beautiful pontifical vestments and costly chalices from the vestment cases under the roof. He succeeded in saving only some of them, and even of those saved some were damaged out on the hill by flying sparks.

The library of some 10,000 volumes was over the entrance to the monastery. The entrance was on the first floor, in the middle of the east side of the main building; a stone stairway led up to the stone platform in front of the entrance door. The books, some of them large tomes, were thrown down from above, most of them landing on the platform and on the steps, whence people tried to carry them to

safety even at the risk of being hurt by falling books or by firebrands from above. Even children were at hand with their little express wagons to help bring books and other things to safety. Only about one-tenth of the library was saved. Flying embers set fire to some of the books stacked too close to the blazing building; even at a distance of hundreds of feet books and other salvaged articles had to be protected against flying sparks. Flaming shingles, whirling high and as far as a thousand feet, alighted on the old, frame monastery and church. Two men climbed into its belfry to extinguish a fiery tongue that from without was licking into the louvers; they had to chop away some of the boards to be able to dash water upon it.

Throughout the neighborhood, especially in the town, people had to be ready to put out fires starting here and there in the dry grass and weeds.

Before leaving for mission work in Illinois and Missouri during that summer, Father Isidor had put the most important seminary records and correspondence, a manuscript history of St. Meinrad, and similar material into a trunk. He had placed the trunk near the door of his room and had instructed Brother Blaise, the House Brother of the seminary, to be sure to save it in case of fire. But in the excitement Brother Blaise, who was helping to save vestments, forgot all about the trunk; all its contents were lost. Likewise lost was a collection of ancient coins, for which the Abbot had but a short time before been offered \$10,000.

The seminarian who was ringing out the alarm from the Abbey tower stayed at his post until the flames, having raced to the north end of the main building, leaped into the belfry and turned it into a huge torch. In quick succession bell upon bell crashed down, each tolling its own funeral knell.

With the fire raging overhead, Abbot Fintan had gone into his room to gather up important documents, such as the Papal Brief of the erection of the Abbey and letters from Einsiedeln; he also saved several precious pectoral crosses and the crosier from Einsiedeln. A man from the town who understood the imminent danger from the flames above hurried into the room and compelled him to

leave. As the Abbot stood at the exit of the lobby and saw the books burning on the platform and steps, he hesitated, but old Brother Martial, the Porter, joined him and helped him over the burning books. At the bottom of the steps the faithful Porter collapsed from exhaustion; as he was being helped up, he said: "Let me die here." Shortly after the two were in safety, some powder and gasoline, that had incautiously been stored underneath the steps, exploded, shattering the stone steps and platform.

It did not take long for the blazing roof to collapse onto the ceiling of the top floor, there to find new fuel, and so on in quick succession down from floor to floor to the bottom of the basement. Finally, a little after one o'clock, the massive stone walls were a blast furnace shooting flames and billowing smoke into the sky. By three o'clock the flames had subsided.

Father Lawrence Huth had taken the Blessed Sacrament to the old church; and when it seemed as though this building, too, would fall a prey to the flames, Brother Blaise, since there was no priest at hand, carried the Blessed Sacrament to the home of Edward Ringemann: "I am here bringing you our dear Savior," he said, as he entered the house. Obededom did not receive the Ark of the Covenant into his home with greater reverence and joy than the Ringemann family welcomed their Eucharistic Lord. Mrs. Ringemann quickly fetched a piece of fine linen—a family heirloom from Germany—and spread it on a table, and the Brother placed the Blessed Sacrament on it. Then Mrs. Ringemann went into the garden and cut a beautiful rose, which she placed alongside the Blessed Sacrament. She then knelt in adoration; as the tension up at the Abbey eased off, the other members of the family joined her.

Toward evening, the Benedictine Sisters, who were the teachers at the school in town, prepared a lunch at their house for the members of the community. The monks had had no food since their scant breakfast early morning.

At about four o'clock, Sisters Lioba and Seraphine, provided with bucket, scrubbing brushes, mop, and soap, went up into the old frame monastery to prepare a room for Abbot Fintan. The room

had been occupied by two elderly workmen and was in an unclean and untidy condition. But before long, thanks to the Sisters, the room was fresh and clean. When the Abbot, passing by, saw what they had accomplished, he was visibly moved and said to them: "The Lord bless you with all good. And I wish you God's blessing, long life and health." Sister Seraphine, at that time a very young nun, was subsequently Mother Prioress at the convent at Ferdinand for many years. Still active, she has many a time recalled this blessing of the Abbot. She feels that she has seen the fulfillment of the blessing in the life and work of her community.

Meanwhile the Fraters of the monastery had been working hard to clean out the old church; since the time that the monastery and the parish had been using the crypt in the Abbey—the crypt had been dedicated on September 13, 1885—the old church was turned into a storeroom for implements and so forth. Nearly all that had been saved from the crypt of the Abbey was now moved into the church. The church was readied to serve its former purpose and to receive the Blessed Sacrament.

Toward evening, the Abbot, vested in surplice and stole, with several Fraters as acolytes and in company with most of the community, went to the Ringemann home to transfer the Blessed Sacrament to the church. As the Abbot was about to fold the linen cloth over the sacred vessel—neither velum nor incense was available—Mrs. Ringemann in a touching act of piety laid a rose upon the linen; its perfume served as incense. And so the procession, joined by the Ringemann family and other town folk, with the acolytes and the small community carrying lighted candles, moved devoutly up to the church.

Thereupon the choir monks, using the few breviaries that had been saved, chanted Vespers and Compline; and so the chanting of the Divine Office suffered no interruption. The Sisters gave two books of their *Little Office of the Blessed Virgin* to the Brothers to enable them to continue the recitation of their office, too, for none of the Brothers' books had been saved.

In the evening, several of the younger monks stood gazing sadly at the smoking ruins of their monastery. As Abbot Fintan, with marks of fire upon his clothing and shoes, approached them, one of them said: "Oh, Father Abbot, what a terrible calamity!" "Yet not so terrible as a mortal sin," was the saintly Abbot's reply.¹

For the time being, the Fathers and Fraters took up their abode in the old monastery. When there was question of finding a place for the Brothers, someone suggested the new, and as yet unused, horse and mule stable: the lower part, a solid stone structure, could be turned into a kitchen and a refectory; the front of the superstructure could serve as an oratory and the rear as a dormitory. The Abbot objected: "But I cannot expect the community to eat in the stable!" Brother Balthasar, a saintly and good-humored man, of whom it has been said that he never had an enemy, replied: "Oh, Father Abbot, that doesn't matter. Many a horse and ass will still feed in there."

Since it took some time to equip a large kitchen and refectory, most of the comparatively small community at home boarded in town, from September 3 to September 28. The Sisters felt honored to have the Abbot as their daily guest. But when a large range, the donation of a benefactor in Cincinnati, had been installed in the improvised kitchen of the stable, the community and the seminarians took their meals in the refectory that had been recommended by Brother Balthasar.

Whether or not to continue the school was a problem. The still absent students were informed of the situation. But by September 24 all the students were at hand: forty-two theologians and eight philosophers, in addition to the Fraters. Together with Father Isidor, the Rector, and Brother Blaise, the House Brother, most of the theologians moved into the Eagle Hotel. (The Abbey had sold this building to someone who subsequently added a dance hall to the rear

¹The account of this disaster is according to letters of Abbot Fintan and Fr. Isidor and the oral narratives of many eye-witnesses whom the author has known. See also *St. Meinrads-Raben*, I, No. 1, January 1, 1888.



THE ABBEY RUINS. (North View.)

of the house. By reason of the dance hall the whole place had become a nuisance to the neighborhood. Since, in addition, the purchaser had defaulted on his notes, the Abbey now again took back the whole property.) The few rooms of the hotel served as the Rector's room, as classrooms, and as private rooms for a few theologians; the dance hall was partitioned into a study hall, a dormitory, and a small room for Brother Blaise. Father Isidor blessed this substitute seminary on September 29. Six theologians had to room in the home of a very good old lady, Mrs. Meiering.

The first thing the seminarians did upon their arrival was to view the ruins of the monastery. As they returned, one of the young theologians said to the others: "For crying out loud! I could weep, looking at all that and thinking what it was when we left for vacation." The Abbot and Father Isidor informed them that since St. Meinrad now had nothing to offer them, it would not be taken amiss if they would transfer to other seminaries. But one spoke up in the name of the rest: "St. Meinrad was good enough for us in better days; it is good enough for us now."

The philosophers were assigned to the former frame college which, since 1882, was called the Scholasticate, a building they shared with the ten Scholastics; it was under the directorship of Father Maurus Helfrich.

Both Jasper and Ferdinand endeavored to have the college established permanently in their town, and in the interest of the Scholasticate some of the Fathers favored the permanent removal of the college from St. Meinrad; but the Abbot was against that plan insofar as the Minor Seminary was concerned. For the time of the emergency (1887-1888), the offer of the Benedictine Sisters at Ferdinand was accepted, namely, that the college be housed in their old convent, near the parish church. The Sisters had moved, in June, 1886, to their new building upon a knoll called Mount Tabor. Father Thomas Weikert was the Rector of the college; the faculty was made up of himself and four other Fathers and three Fraters. The college had an enrollment of fifty-six students. At the beginning



THE ABBEY RUINS. (South View.)

of the following school year the college was opened again at St. Meinrad.

With regard to the pressing task of reconstruction, Abbot Fintan wrote on October 6: "In the name of God we will begin the work anew."² Two of the Fathers were strongly in favor of moving to some other part of the country. Of those who were in favor of remaining at St. Meinrad the majority preferred the wide plateau atop Monte Cassino. Abbot Fintan, however, together with some others, thought it best to rebuild on the old site, utilizing the old walls as much as their condition would permit. He had two architects examine the walls; both architects declared the walls unsafe. The west wall of the college was thought to be the strongest, but wind caused it to break and collapse just above the ledge of the thicker basement wall; except for the gable walls supporting it at each end, it had no cross walls to buttress it on the inner side. As a precaution, about a story and a half of the parallel wall were pulled down.

The Abbot was against acting hastily. After four weeks, when the heat had subsided sufficiently, the work of clearing up the debris was begun; with the inside cleared, a more definitive judgment would be possible. In this work the seminarians gave energetic help; they would spend their free afternoons on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the job. After eight weeks, embers were found still smouldering underneath the top ashes. Eventually, apart from some badly damaged copings and here and there a bad spot that had been especially blasted and cracked by the fire, the walls appeared to be safe. So the Fathers agreed to rebuild on the old site, even to use the same walls, which would be repaired wherever that was necessary. Today, sixty-seven years after the fire, those walls are still solid.

Father Benno Gerber, O.S.B., was recalled from Belleville, Illinois, to direct the work of reconstruction. He began with the ruins of what had been the college. The wing that had been the Major Seminary and had connected the monastery with the college

² St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1076 (To the Dean of Eins., Oct. 6, 1887).



THE COLLEGE RECONSTRUCTED. (Southwest View.)

was now made a part of the college itself. The college was ready for occupation and was blessed on September 2, 1888.³

What had, from the center projection to the southern end of the east front, previously been a part of the Abbey, was now made the Major Seminary. The former refectory of the collegians and of the seminarians was made their joint chapel; at present it is the eastern part of the refectory of the Major Seminary. The kitchen was installed in the basement of the center east-west wing of the main building. The joint refectory of the college and seminary was in the basement south of the kitchen; that of the monastery, north. The seminarians moved into the restored building on April 15, 1889.⁴

At that time St. Meinrad made an important and far-reaching change in its education program. Beginning with the scholastic year of 1889-1890, the commercial course was separated from the college at St. Meinrad; the college was made exclusively a Minor Seminary, and the commercial course was transferred to Jasper, Dubois County, in September, 1889. Thus Jasper College, later called Jasper Academy, began.⁵

The restoration of the monastery was the final task undertaken. The top story—the chapel—of the center section was taken down and, for the time being, the western section of the story underneath it was turned into the monastic chapel. The old church again served as parish church. The statue of the Blessed Virgin, rescued from the crypt, had been taken, first to the scholasticate and, from there, to the Sisters' house. Someone—the Brothers used to say it was Father Meinrad's idea—now painted the face and the hands of this statue black, in imitation of the statue of Our Lady of Einsiedeln, which in the course of centuries had become blackened from the smoke of many candles. Thus painted, the statue, carried on the shoulders of four Brothers, was in procession transferred to the old church where

³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (*Book of Memoranda & Notanda*, by Fr. Isidor, p. 43).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Annual Catalogue of St. Meinrad's College and Ecclesiastical Seminary, 1888-1889*, p. 23, *Commercial Course, Jasper, Dubois County, Ind. Prospectus*.

it again was enthroned over the main altar. But nearly everybody found the artificial blackening of the statue repulsive; and so did Father Luke Gruwe, the pastor. It was he who, skilled also in the use of paint and brush, after a while again gave the lovely statue its befitting complexion.

The new arrangement cut the living space of the monastery proper to about half of what it had been. To provide additional space for the future expansion of the monastery to the north, the old plan to build a part of the church over the extant walls of the crypt was given up; hence, the reconstruction of the monastery temporarily ended with its former north section. The restored monastery was blessed, on September 2, 1889, but the monks moved in only on the feast of the Most Holy Rosary, October 6.⁶

From that time on, St. Meinrad began to expand beyond its original dimensions. Another section, connecting the west end of the center wing with the northeast corner of the college, was erected in 1892 and 1893. It contained a vaulted cellar connected with the rear of the kitchen; a first story, which was to serve as the monastic chapel until a church would be built; and a second story for a library. Of that building only the larger part of the cellar remains; the two stories formerly built over the cellar were taken down after the new library was finished, but were rebuilt in more recent years to house the Brothers.

The so-called Annex, a long, two-storied frame building that stood where now are the Refectory of the Minor Seminary and the dining room for the guests, was erected in spring, 1894; it contained the printing office, the bookbindery, some other small shops, several private rooms, and the showers.

After the fire the metal of the bells was sent to the Stuckstede Bell Foundry, in St. Louis, where it was cast into a set of six sonorous bells attuned to the minor chord of C, E \flat , F, G, B \flat , c'. An appropriate coincidence, this chord is a characteristic tonality of the songs of the North American Indian. For the time being, these bells were

⁶ Book of Memoranda & Notanda, by Fr. Isidor, p. 43; St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1102 (Abbot Fintan to the Dean, Sept, 25, 1889).



THE ABBEY AND MAJOR SEMINARY RESTORED. (East View.)

Left, Boiler house and, over it, carpenter shop. Right foreground, the milk house
and Father Cyrin Thomas, the Econome

mounted on a roofed and boarded trestle, about 16 feet high, set at the top of the northeastern spur of the monastery hill.⁷ In March, 1896, a benefactor donated a large tower clock, made by Mannhart and Company, Munich, Bavaria. A wooden tower, about 20 feet high, was built along the east side of the belfry to house the clock until the church towers would be built. The clock is now in the church towers.

Another major building project was the northward extension of the monastery. This new building, 55 feet wide and 106 feet long, was to connect the old building with the church that was planned even then. The building was begun on May 10, 1895. The Fraters occupied their story of the building in September, 1896. It took a few weeks more to finish the interior of the other stories.⁸

These successes in reconstruction were made possible both by a severe economy and by contributions of money, goods and books, given by Monasteries, Convents, Catholic Publishers, priests, and laymen in Europe and in the United States. These contributions, though not large individually, were of a considerable amount collectively.

The widespread interest aroused by the news of the catastrophe of the fire was strongly stimulated by the *St. Meinrad's-Raben*, which Father Bede edited and published every other month, beginning with January 1, 1888. On June 1, 1888, Abbot Fintan sent a circular letter in which he called the attention of the Benedictine monasteries to the new monthly. He wrote that the *St. Meinrad's-Raben*, or a similar publication under another name, was to be a bond of fraternal union between the two American Benedictine Congregations, was to establish friendly contact between the Benedictines the world over, and to bring Benedictine liturgical, ascetical, educational, and cultural ideals in general to bear upon the faithful at large. He suggested

⁷ There are in the archives (folder, *Bells*) two ledgers containing a history of all the bells at St. Meinrad, including the blessing of the new bells after the fire and the regulations for ringing them.

⁸ *Paradiesesfrüchte (St. Meinrads-Raben) Ybrg, viii, Juni, 1895; Ybrg. IX, Oct., 1896.*

that some attention be paid also to the "institute of the oblates."

Complying with a request that there be a more general Benedictine magazine in the United States, Father Bede started the monthly *St. Benedikts-Panier*. Keeping the *St. Meinrads-Raben* as a supplement, the magazine was published from January, 1889, to December, 1894. In January, 1892, a second supplement, *Paradiesesfrüchte*, was added. In January, 1895, the magazine dropped the name *St. Benedikts-Panier*, and, still retaining the supplement *St. Meinrads-Raben*, became the Eucharistic monthly, *Paradiesesfrüchte*. In 1936, under the editorship of Father Luke, when the dwindling German reading public no longer justified the expenses incurred in the publication of a periodical in German, the *Paradiesesfrüchte* was discontinued. Its last issue was that of July, 1936. But in anticipation of that contingency, *The Grail*, likewise a monthly, had been published since 1919.⁹

There was a special, providential reason why Father Bede turned the Benedictine magazine into a Eucharistic one. As an exchange for the *St. Benedikts-Panier*, he had received the pastoral paper, *Hirtentasche*, published in Vienna. In that paper he read about the Priests' Eucharistic League, the central direction of which was in the hands of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, Paris. Father Bede, writing at once to the Reverend J. Künzle, director general of the League in the Diocese of St. Gallen and Chur, Switzerland, asked for its *Statutes* and to be enrolled. Künzle complied with the request. Replying on April 15, 1891, to Künzle's letter, Father Bede

⁹ *The Grail* is not the first magazine in English edited and published at St. Meinrad. In November, 1891, there appeared the *Alma Mater*, a worthy monthly by the Seminarians and Collegians, containing notable contributions also from outsiders; its editorial committee consisted of the Rev. Vincent Wagner, O.S.B., the Rev. Robert Glasmeyer, O.S.B., and the Rev. Joseph Chartrand (Seminary). In July, 1895, under the editorship of Father Clement Klingel, O.S.B., the *Alma Mater* was changed to *The Monthly Visitor: A Catholic Magazine for the Home Circle and the Fireside*. This was a good-sized magazine and of literary value, but, unfortunately, had to suspend publication after December, 1896.—The *St. Meinrads-Raben*, too, was preceded by a mimeographed monthly, *St. Meinrads-Raben* (January-August, 1887), which was sent as a newsletter from the monastery to its members on the missions.

wrote: "Abbot Fintan Mundwiler commissions me to inform you that we will employ all our strength to propagate the glorious work." The Blessed Sacrament Fathers, with whom Father Bede had likewise opened correspondence, made him the Director General of the League in the United States of America. In April, 1891, Father Bede enrolled Fathers Columban Wenzel, O.S.B., and Robert Glasmeyer, O.S.B.; adding himself as the third member. Others followed. In the May (1891) issue of the *Pastoral-Blatt*, St. Louis, Father Bede made an appeal to the clergy in general. And so the Priests' Eucharistic League was officially introduced into the United States.¹⁰ This event caused Father Bede's literary activity to gravitate toward the Blessed Sacrament; hence the change from the name *St. Benedikts-Panier* to *Paradiesesfrüchte*.

St. Meinrad's Abbey became still more deeply engaged in the Priests' Eucharistic League. Father Bede had felt from the beginning that the league would need a publication in English, but it was only in January, 1895, that *Emmanuel, Official Monthly of the Priests' Eucharistic League*, began to appear. Bishop Camillus Maes, of Covington, accepted the duties of Editor; Father Bede was its Manager. In October, 1897, Father Vincent Wagner, O.S.B., who even before that had been Father Bede's faithful secretary for English correspondence, succeeded him as Manager of *Emmanuel* and, some time later, also as Director General of the League till, at the beginning of 1902, the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, who had now come to the United States, took over this work, proper to them.

However, ten years previously, Abbot Fintan, Father Bede, and Father Vincent had visualized and planned Eucharistic Congresses for the United States. Through Abbot Romaric Flugi, Abbot Fintan obtained on June 8, 1892, the Holy Father's special blessing upon all taking part in such a work. In October, 1892, a printed letter, carrying the names of "Fintan Mundwiler, O.S.B., Abbot" and "P. Bede

¹⁰ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 8, folder, *Priests' Eucharistic League* (*Societas Presbyterorum, Associatio Adorationis, Relatio historica operis nostri*); Father Bede's letters (retainers), Book C, pp. 147. 148 (Bede to Künzle, April 15, 1891).

Maler, O.S.B., Director of the *Confraternitas Sacerdotalis Ador. Ss. Sacramenti* for the United States," was sent to the Archbishop of Chicago and, shortly thereafter, to the rest of the hierarchy.¹¹ The letter suggested that a Eucharistic Congress be held at Chicago in 1893, on the occasion of the Columbian World's Fair; it presented an elaborate and practical program according to which the wonders and glory of the Blessed Sacrament were to be presented to the Catholics of the nationalities that would come to view the wonders and the glory of material progress. Father Bede had written along the same lines in the July number, 1892, of the *Paradiesesfrüchte*; and in the June number, 1893, he directly called for an expression of opinions regarding such a congress. His own opinion was: "All things possible should be done to make a Eucharistic Congress in the United States a reality."¹¹

Bishop Marty, whom Abbot Fintan had acquainted with the plan for such a congress, called it an "excellent suggestion," and he added "I am heart and soul for the Eucharistic Congress."¹² Bishop Maes was heartily in favor of the plan proposed, but not so the Archbishop of Chicago; wherefore it had to be laid aside so far as that city and that year were concerned.

Yet the seed sown had taken root in good ground, for, on August 7 and 8, 1894, the first convention—it was also called "Congress"—of the Priest's Eucharistic League was held at Notre Dame University, Indiana. Abbot Fintan was one of the speakers. He spoke on *The History and Present Status of the Eucharistic League in the United States*.¹³ Bishop Rademacher, of Fort Wayne, Bishop

¹¹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Priests' Eucharistic League* (Sample of letter).

¹² St. Meinrad Archabbey archives (Bishop Martin to Abbot Fintan, Oct. 26, 1892).

¹³ *American Ecclesiastical Review*, Vol. XI, pp. 329-332 (1894); *Emmanuel*, Vol. XXV, pp. 244-256 (*The Jubilee-Convention of the Priests' Eucharistic League in the United States*, 1894-1919, by Fr. Bede Maler, O.S.B.); *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 49-52, (*The Story of the Eucharistic Movement in the United States*).

Maes, of Covington, and Bishop Chatard, of Indianapolis, were present, and there was much profitable exchange of thought.

The next Congress of the League was held in Washington, D.C., on October 2 and 3, 1895; it was attended by so large a number of the hierarchy that it deserved the name of the first National Eucharistic Congress of the United States.

The following Congress, on an even larger scale by reason of the well-planned participation of the laity, was held at St. Louis on October 14-17, 1901. The difficulties to be overcome in organizing this Congress, as well as the previous ones, must have been great indeed, judging from a letter of Father Vincent Wagner, who had charge of the arrangement, and from his account of it in *Emmanuel*; but the results were gratifying.¹⁴

The later Diocesan and Provincial Congresses and the magnificent National Eucharistic Congresses are the fruit of those humble but farsighted beginnings. At as recent a date as 1935 the National Eucharistic Committee had Father Bede, then in his eighty-seventh year, on its roster as Historian and Consultor.

The Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament—whose arrival in the United States was eagerly looked for by Fathers Bede and Vincent—upon taking over the general direction, in 1902, gave generous and well-merited recognition to the first two General Directors and organizers of the Priests' Eucharistic League and of the Congresses. They wrote:

... The actual number of the members of the Priests' Eucharistic League in this country eloquently tells us the amount of work done by the Rev. Fathers Bede and Vincent, who were, successively, its worthy directors.

We would have a very imperfect idea of the merit due them, if we did not tell our readers that the time these good fathers gave to the Priests' Eucharistic League had to be taken out of their leisure and their recreations; even their rest was sacrificed to it.

We congratulate them on their devotedness, and on the grand result of their work, and we express our gratitude

¹⁴ Vol. VII, numbers 7-12.

to their Right Reverend Abbot, who was kind enough to direct them to take charge of an undertaking, which, however laudable it is in itself, is, nevertheless, in no special manner embraced within the sphere of good works to which the great Order of St. Benedict is devoted.¹⁵

Of Abbot Fintan, *Emmanuel* had this to say:

No man in the United States has a better claim to the thankful remembrance of the Priests' Eucharistic League than Abbot Mundwiler; he was its American sponsor. In his Abbey of St. Meinrad's, Indiana, with his sanction and encouragement, the Priests' Eucharistic League began its noble work of salvation, and his Benedictine monks were the men to do it. To this day the workings of the Priests' Eucharistic League depend entirely upon the self-sacrifice of Abbot Fintan's Benedictine brethren, and few understand the full extent of self-denial and devotion to the work which were demanded of the Abbot and his monks to do justice to the task and not neglect their life-work. Yet, in some way or another, the busiest men are the very ones who always find time to do more work.¹⁶

And so, through Divine Providence, the destructive fire of 1887, indirectly brought it about that the sacred, creative fire of Eucharistic love has been made to burn more intensely in the hearts of the faithful and, in particular, of the priests of the United States.

¹⁵ *Emmanuel*, Vol. III, (1902), pp. 1-4.

¹⁶ Vol. IV (1898), pp. 66-67.

CHAPTER XII

VISITATION AND VINDICATION OF ABBOT FINTAN. HIS DEATH

IN VIEW of the material destruction wrought by the fire and of the consequent impediments to regular monastic observance, it is remarkable that within three years and with the scant means at hand so much reconstruction was accomplished in either regard. Yet, though the main building had again been restored and furnished in a very simple fashion, one could not reasonably expect monastic observance not to show some signs of the stress under which it had labored, especially since the community still had to live in three separate buildings: the restored main building, the old, frame monastery, and the Scholasticate.

In every regard, the burden and the worry resting upon Abbot Fintan were great indeed, even though the hardships were understood and borne with by the community at large.

There was one man, however, who did not—perhaps it would be more just to say, could not—rise to the high level demanded by the situation; that man was Father Meinrad McCarthy. Father Meinrad was not devoid of energy and zeal; but his mental vision had become progressively self-centered and, accordingly, his judgment biased in his own behalf—factors that resulted in a heedless tenacity of purpose. That disposition, gradually becoming more pronounced, became the cause of distress to others and of harm to himself. Moreover, he was deficient in the control of both his temper and his palate.

When, toward the end of 1878, Abbot Martin had decided to take Father Meinrad off the Indian missions in Dakota and had asked Father Eugene Phelan, O.S.B., of St. Malachy's Priory, Creston, Iowa, who wanted an assistant, whether he was willing to accept Father Meinrad, Father Eugene answered: "I would be afraid to take P. Meinrad, not alone on account of what has occurred, but also on account of his disposition. I remember him well from St. Vincent's. From the accounts I heard when I was in Crown Point (where Father Meinrad had been for a short time with Father Aegidius Henne-mann), I would be in constant dread of a relapse."¹

When, in 1881, Bishop Machebeuf on a visit to St. Meinrad expressed the wish to have Benedictines in Colorado, Father Meinrad requested Abbot Fintan to let him go there; he planned to make "an English or Irish" foundation. "But," so Abbot Fintan wrote to Abbot Frowin, "he will hardly succeed." Yet Abbot Fintan, perhaps for the sake of peace, reluctantly allowed Father Meinrad to go "prospecting" in Colorado. He left St. Meinrad on August 22. At first his reports ranged from enthusiasm to discouragement; but eventually he selected a place where, if permission were granted him, he would build a house and an adjacent hospital, to be finished by July, 1882. "Well," Abbot Fintan wrote, "there probably will be no hurry for that."² And there was no hurry; indeed, that very summer found Father Meinrad back at St. Meinrad.

When the students for the Order were lodged in a separate building, the Scholasticate (Sept. 2, 1882), Abbot Fintan, who had but few experienced men at his disposal, made Father Meinrad Rector of the Scholasticate. But after only one scholastic year it was found advisable to replace him. Thereafter, Abbot Fintan no longer ventured to appoint him to any office.—Such was the man who thought himself called to reform the monastery.

Father Meinrad McCarthy did not abruptly begin his work of

¹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Rev. Meinrad McCarthy* (Fr. Eugene Phelan, O.S.B., to Abbot Martin, Dec. 12, 1878).

² St. Meinrad Archabbey archives. (Copies of letters of Abbot Fintan to Abbot Frowin, Nov. 4, 24, 1881; Jan. 24, 1882).

"reform." For many a year he was merely the self-constituted censor of monastic discipline so far as others were concerned, even going so far as to question Abbot Fintan's ability as a superior. Yet, as one of the Fathers expressed himself, Father Meinrad had every reason to be well satisfied on account of the special considerateness with which the Abbot had at all times dealt with him.³

That the Abbot had been especially kind toward Father Meinrad was the opinion of the community in general. But at least one of the monks, Father Placidus Zarn, who had recently been recalled to the monastery and made Subprior and Instructor of the Clerics and Brothers, was sympathetic toward Father Meinrad.

Instead of respectfully submitting his observations to his Abbot or to the President of the Congregation, as the holy Rule and the Statutes prescribe, Father Meinrad turned immediately to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda. He later wrote that he had left the monastery twice "to lay at the feet of the Abbot of Abbots a true statement of the miserable condition of affairs, both spiritual and temporal, at St. Meinrad."⁴ The sources at hand give no certain indication whether—in case he did go or write to Rome twice—he had gone or written in person previous to May 9, 1891, or whether he had done that through someone in sympathy with him, or whether somebody had written without his knowledge. Writing to Abbot Frowin on June 14, 1892, Father Meinrad asserted that he had neither written to the Propaganda nor knew who had, but that in the spring of the previous year he had written a letter to Bishop Marty. Since Father Meinrad later wrote disparagingly of Bishop Marty, one may assume that the Bishop either did not answer—which seems most likely—or that his answer was not gratifying to Father Meinrad. As things stand, the identity of the complainant could be estab-

³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives. (Fr. Sigisbert Zarn, O.S.B., to Abbot Fintan, July 17, 1891).

⁴ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Rev. Meinrad McCarthy* (Fr. Meinrad to Fr. Pius Boehm, O.S.B., superior of the mission at Stephan, S. Dakota, Nov. 9, 1897).

lished only by recourse to the archives of the Propaganda; these, however, are inaccessible for an affair of so recent a date.

Abbot Fintan was unpleasantly surprised to receive the following diplomatically worded, official letter from Simeoni, the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda, dated May 9, 1891:

Knowing Your Paternity's great concern that the religious discipline and the administration of the Abbey of St. Meinrad, which you govern, be restored to a more exact form, I have thought that it would be of no mean help to you to have the service of some Visitor by the support of whose counsels and authority you might more easily and conveniently arrive at the desired result. Wherefore I have thought it opportune to entrust this service to the Bishop of Vincennes, who may perform it as some administrative matter and be of assistance to you in the illustrious work you have in mind.⁵

Under date of May 6 the Cardinal Prefect had written to Bishop Chatard, instructing him that he should conduct a Visitation in the name of the Cardinal Prefect "on the subject of the condition of the abbey . . . to gather information and to report the result to him."⁶ Bishop Chatard requested Abbot Fintan to send him "a copy of the Constitutions and rules"; these would be the standard by which he would judge the actual state of monastic life at the Abbey. Since he was to be at Ferdinand, July 6-9, he planned to go to St. Meinrad on July 9. His visit would thus appear to be merely a courtesy visit; it was his wish that publicity be avoided as much as possible.

Abbot Fintan had no sooner received the Cardinal Prefect's letter than he addressed the following reply to him, on June 9.

I have received your letter of May 9 . . . in which you notify me that a Visitation of my Abbey is to be made by the Bishop of Vincennes. I thank you for your kindness and the paternal care that Your Eminence entertains for me and my monks.

⁵ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 10, folder, *Fintan Mundwiler, (II Abbas)*.

⁶ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 10, folder, *Bishop Chatard* (Bishop Chatard to Abbot Fintan, June 15, 1891).

Though I am always "ready, and am not troubled, that I may keep Thy commandment," yet in this case, I confess, I am somewhat troubled. The reason is, that, when I received Your Eminence's letter, I had just returned from the monastery of New Engelberg, in the state of Missouri. I had undertaken a canonical Visitation there. After we had treated of several matters pertaining to the state of our Congregation, I invited Abbot Frowin to make a Visitation in my Abbey. He was not to do this immediately, but after a Visitation of the Priory of Mount Angel, in the state of Oregon.

I admit that a canonical Visitation has not been held these past four years, though it should have been. But I humbly beseech Your Eminence to consider the sad conditions under which we have lived during the past four years. Then you may judge whether a Visitation could have been conducted in proper form.

Without doubt Your Eminence is not ignorant of the fact that our monastery has been totally destroyed by a terrible conflagration. Alas, what great anxieties and tribulations overwhelmed us then! Where was this so numerous religious family to dwell? How could order and monastic discipline be observed properly under the prevailing circumstances? The old buildings, partly collapsing, had to be repaired; roofs had to be found, remodeled and restored to be of service for a hundred young alumni of the seminary and college and for so many monks and Fraters and Brothers, and for servants. New furniture had to be bought and other goods for the house had to be ordered again. We lived any place we could—in barns, in stables, in various workshops, and in old, almost collapsing buildings, distant from one another! For the students of the major seminary we purchased and adapted a public inn or hotel in the nearby town of St. Meinrad; for the college boys, a sufficiently spacious, at that time vacant old building in the town of Ferdinand, six miles distant from the Abbey, had been offered us; a part of the priest-monks were sent there to teach the boys. At the same time, the monastery, destroyed by fire, had to be rebuilt. What labors the Brothers endured in cutting and hauling stone and timber; and

what expenses we had to incur! Yet in the vicissitudes of these adverse circumstances all the brethren observed the monastic order as well as they could. Not even for one day, whether at day or night, have we omitted the recitation or singing of the Divine Office in the parish church; the order of the day has been observed as before; day and night the brethren assembled from their various dwelling places for the regular exercises. After a delay of two or three weeks, the school and the seminary were reopened and continued as before, as may be seen from the catalogue that has been sent.

It has taken us two years to rebuild the monastery, and a third year to furnish the interior. But the monastery is not nearly so completed as it had been. Consequently we have not up to now had sufficient space to lodge all the brethren. Most of the Brothers still live in an old house [the old monastery] about 600 feet from the [new] monastery. Your Eminence may easily decide whether under such trying circumstances a Visitation could have been held. It is hardly any wonder that in such a state of affairs monastic discipline became somewhat relaxed, either through too great an indulgence or lack of care on my part—for which I am sorry—or, through much association and mingling of the brethren with lay people. For, because of a lack of enough workers of our own, we had to hire many secular artisans and workmen for the extensive work of rebuilding the monastery—a situation that was harmful for religious silence, separation, and recollection.

Much was wanting especially in the administration of offices, on account of the lack of qualified persons. As appears from the attached list of monks, the number would seem to be sufficiently large. But the works in the vineyard of the Lord are so many and so great and the number of the laborers so small that I could hardly resist the insistent petitions of the Bishops of various Dioceses and of secular priests to send them help. And so it has happened at times that some monastic offices remained temporarily vacant. In such cases I myself have ever so many times supplied for the deficiency, imposing too heavy and manifold a burden upon myself. Preoccupied as I was with many matters, I

could not give sufficient attention to details. And thus, to the displeasure of some, certain duties of administration were fulfilled less perfectly. In this, indeed, I have erred. But this defect has already for some time been corrected. For I have recalled to the monastery several of the Fathers whom I had sent either on permanent missions or as substitutes. They have filled the principal offices, so that, with the burdens placed on several shoulders, the requirements of the individual offices are better provided for.

Your Eminence can judge the state of our missions from the accompanying reports.

A word now about the temporal affairs of the monastery. Before the conflagration, we still were burdened with a debt of \$40,000, whereas in the beginning of my administration, eleven years ago, we owed over \$60,000. By the first part of this year our debt had been reduced to about \$39,000. About \$10,000 is owed to us, and if we consider this sum as in our hands, the debt amounts to \$30,000. Such is our total debt, in spite of the very large sums of money expended in rebuilding the monastery.—Our landed property and fields have been increased by 100 acres and improved.

All these things taken into consideration, I humbly ask Your Eminence that this canonical Visitation be entrusted to some Visitor from our Congregation rather than to the Bishop. This would be more in keeping with our Statutes and with our exemption, especially since there is hardly any need of proceeding in an extraordinary manner when the affair could be settled in the ordinary manner. And if the Visitation made by the Regular and Ordinary Visitor will be of no avail, then let the affair be entrusted to an Extraordinary Visitor—to the Diocesan Bishop or to anybody else pleasing to you.

If, however, it does not please Your Eminence that the Visitation be for this time entrusted to our regular Visitor, namely to Frowin, Abbot of New Engelberg, surely a man full of the Spirit of God, I will certainly with the greatest reverence receive the Bishop of Vincennes, whom you have appointed.⁷

⁷ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Fintan Mundwiler, (II Abbas)*. (Retainer of letter).

Upon receipt of this letter, Cardinal Simeoni, under date of July 13, answered that he had written to the Bishop of Vincennes to refrain from holding the Visitation. He added that he did not doubt that the Visitation by Abbot Frowin would greatly help in gradually bringing monastic life back to its normal state, once the extraordinary situation that had arisen from the conflagration of the monastery was removed.⁸

These countermands of Cardinal Simeoni were too late to check his previous directions. Bishop Chatard arrived on the afternoon of July 9. At his request Abbot Fintan had notified the Fathers on parish duty to be present in the monastery. It was only on the preceding day, however, that he informed the community that the Bishop was coming to conduct a Visitation. Abbot Fintan thus complied with the Bishop's request that as little publicity as possible be given the affair. The visitation was opened on July 9 and was concluded on July 11.

From the kind of questions the Bishop asked, the Fathers could promptly and with certainty conclude that the accusations had come from within the monastery. They realized who was at the bottom of it all.—And so Abbot Fintan could write the following lines to Abbot Frowin:

Consequently there was general indignation over the one, or the several—perhaps two or three—concerned, and over the misrepresentation, exaggeration, and partly groundless and untrue presentation of affairs. This was the tenor of the accusations: the chapel, or choir, is not at the right place; it is too narrow and without light and healthful air [it is to be kept in mind that that large room was only an emergency chapel]; the sick are not taken care of; mistakes are not punished; women are admitted into the monastery [that, of course, was a lie out of whole cloth; violation of monastic enclosure would have meant excommunication]; the finances are poorly managed, and financially the monastery is on its way to ruin; not enough officials are appointed; for two years no Master of Novices, no Cellarer; the Prior

⁸ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Fintan Mundwiler (II Abbas)*.

was absent for a year; the Statutes prescribed for us in the Bull [?] of erection have been changed and other regulations, of which nobody knows anything, substituted; the Brothers are lodged in a house far from the monastery . . . etc., etc. These and similar accusations, partly false, partly exaggerated, naturally were shown in their true light. The ensuing indignation of the community against the one—or the several—accusers manifested itself in much consoling sympathy toward me. This put the Bishop in a very good humor.⁹

The Bishop had not yet left the house when the Fathers, Fraters, and Brothers all came to the Abbot's room and offered him their good wishes for his birthday, which was the following day. They told him of "their most faithful love, sympathy, and loyalty." The result was that the bond of unity in the community was greatly strengthened.¹⁰

Naturally, the Bishop did not make public his report to the Propaganda. Probably it was in substance similar to the report Abbot Fintan had sent on June 9. The Bishop did say to one of the Fathers: "Father Meinrad has exaggerated." Abbot Fintan quoted the Bishop as saying that Father Meinrad was mentally deranged. Abbot Frowin arrived at the same conclusion.

The Visitation did not end the distressing affair; for, when ten months had elapsed and the reforming measures that he expected from Rome were not forthcoming, Father Meinrad determined to lay his cause "at the feet of the Abbot of Abbots" in person, to use his expression. He turned first to Abbot Frowin, to whom he addressed a letter from the city of St. Paul, Minnesota, June 14, 1892.¹¹ He informed Abbot Frowin that on May 1, 1892, he had Father Sub-

⁹ Conception Abbey archives. (Abbot Fintan to Abbot Frowin, Aug. 13, 1891).

¹⁰ St. M. Ll. IX, p. 1109 (Abbot Fintan to the Dean, Oct. 14, 1891).

¹¹ Conception Abbey archives. Copy among the letters of Fintan to Frowin, St. Meinrad Archabbey archives. Abbot Fintan wrote also to George Mealy, with whom Fr. Meinrad was staying, to caution him as to Father Meinrad's canonical standing. Mealy showed this letter to Father Meinrad, who, in turn, included it in his letter to Abbot Frowin.

prior Placidus hand Abbot Fintan a letter. (He would not speak to the Abbot in person.) In that letter he had asked for permission to leave the monastery for the purpose of going to Rome "to make a statement to our holy Father on the manner in which our Abbey is governed. . . . I told him, true friends would pay my travelling expenses to Rome and requested him to let me know his decision on the 16th of May by the Very Rev. Subprior, my confessor. I also told him that if he refused me permission I would write to the Pope for his permission to go to Rome. He gave me no reply and so I thought I had his tacit permission to go to Rome."—Strange reasoning, indeed!

The Abbot was absent at the time, and the Prior could, of course, not give so extraordinary a permission. Father Meinrad nevertheless left the Abbey, on June 1, "with full permission of the Subprior," [?] so he claimed. He stayed for eight days at Cannelton, 20 miles distant from the Abbey. There a letter from Abbot Fintan arrived, informing him that he was excommunicated and that, if he performed any sacred function, he would be irregular. From Cannelton, as Father Meinrad told Abbot Frowin by the letter mentioned previously, he proceeded to St. Paul. In that city he had an interview with Archbishop Grace (who had resigned in 1884) and with Abbot Bernard, of St. John's Abbey. In conclusion, Father Meinrad asked Abbot Frowin for an appointment to lay his case before him: "I feel that I could in conversation make plain to you what is required to make our Abbey a place of peace and contentment."

Abbot Frowin answered that the best advice he could give him was to return to St. Meinrad and make good the injustice he had worked against it. "I am well enough acquainted with St. Meinrad," Abbot Frowin wrote to Abbot Fintan, to be able to assure Father Meinrad "that he can sanctify himself very well if he lives according to the Rule as it is observed there."¹²

Father Meinrad returned to the Abbey on July 9. He did not see why he should perform any penance, for he said he had done nothing

¹² St. Meinrad Archabbey archives. (Frowin to Fintan, June 30, 1892).

wrong and had intended only the best for the monastery.¹³ In answer to a letter from Abbot Frowin, Abbot Fintan wrote: "Self-willed as he is, he wants to see the Pope in person and to speak to him; the Cardinal, the Propaganda, the Bishop are not enough for him. And then he demands from me a written recommendation and credentials. He cannot take care of himself outside, as long experience has proved; I have had to remove him from every place. And I do not know how to make use of him in the monastery: everywhere he comes into conflict with everybody by reason of his ways and ideas; and then the Superior is supposed to protect him, pronounce him right, and agree to all his follies."¹⁴

From 1891 on, Abbot Fintan had been reorganizing the administration of the Abbey, establishing the various offices and assigning specific duties to each office. The lack of such systemization had previously given rise to some difficulties, as he himself had pointed out in his report to the Propaganda. In substance, his arrangement is in force to the present day.¹⁵

After a brief interval, the Propaganda again received complaints about Abbot Fintan; namely, that the grievances voiced in the Visitation of July, 1891, were not being removed. Father Meinrad had on his recent trip apparently succeeded—either in person or through an intermediary—in sending a new report to the Propaganda. Cardinal Ledochowski was now Prefect of the Propaganda since the death of Cardinal Simeoni. Under date of November 22, 1892, Cardinal Ledochowski sent an official letter of inquiry to Abbot Basil of Einsiedeln.¹⁶ He first summed up the earlier accusations, according to which the Abbot was too indulgent and arbitrarily managed the affairs of the monastery without regard for the appointed officials or the Chapter. He then pointed out that suggestions for improvement

¹³ *Ibid.* (Fr. Benno Gerber, the Prior, to Abbot Fintan, July 11, 1892; cf. Fintan to Frowin, Dec. 28, 1892).

¹⁴ Conception Abbey archives. (Fintan to Frowin, July 9, 1892).

¹⁵ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 8, folder, *Officials of House: Their Duties*.

¹⁶ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Fintan Mundwiler (II Abbas)*. Abbot Basil later sent that letter to St. Meinrad.

had been made to the Abbot upon the occasion of the Bishop's visitation. However, he added, after the lapse of more than a year new complaints about relaxed monastic discipline had been made. Since the monastery of Einsiedeln had founded that of St. Meinrad, the Cardinal Prefect wanted to know just what connection still existed between the two monasteries and what information the Abbot of Einsiedeln could furnish that might be helpful in investigating and bettering the situation.

Abbot Basil answered promptly, on November 28. He wrote:

The monastery of St. Meinrad stemming from the monastery of Einsiedeln, and erected an Abbey on September 30, 1870, has since then been altogether independent of Einsiedeln and, together with the Abbeys of New Engelberg and Subiaco and the Priory of Mount Angel, constitutes the Benedictine Swiss-American Congregation. Abbot Fintan Mundwiler, the Abbot General, heads the Congregation. He is possessed of every quality of a good religious, strives to safeguard for the monastery all good, both spiritual and temporal, and with paternal solicitude is zealous for regular discipline. He visited us for several weeks in 1885. Filled with paternal charity, he spoke only well of his religious. But it is to be regretted that not all of his religious are filled with the same true Benedictine spirit; yes, a few of them neglect the observance of the holy Rule, are disobedient and, never satisfied, murmur. And these religious seem to be the very ones who, neglectful of discipline and not seeing the beam in their own eyes, complain about the faults of the Abbot and denounce him. Really, the Right Reverend Abbot Fintan has been overly patient in dealing with them. Doubtless this has followed from his fear that greater severity toward them would lead only to greater scandals.¹⁷

In extenuation of Abbot Fintan's alleged neglect to appoint more officials and to consult those actually appointed, Abbot Basil pointed to chapter 65 of the holy Rule, which leaves to the Abbot the appointment to the various offices and the assignment of the functions of the officials.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* He sent Abbot Fintan a copy of that answer.

He next called attention to the fact that all those complaints against Abbot Fintan should have been made first to the Regular Visitor provided for in the Constitutions of the Swiss-American Congregation.

Finally, Abbot Basil suggested that the Propaganda might get further information from Father Thomas Weikert, a monk of St. Meinrad. Father Thomas was teaching Oriental Sciences at Sant' Anselmo, Rome. He had visited Einsiedeln for several weeks during the preceding vacation, and the monks of Einsiedeln considered him "an outstanding religious, filled with the Benedictine spirit."

The Propaganda seemed satisfied with Abbot Basil's report. But Father Meinrad remained restive. On the night of January 6-7, 1893, he again left the monastery on his own authority. He intended to go to Rome so as to put his grievances personally before the Holy Father. On February 9 the Dean of Einsiedeln informed Father Thomas Weikert that Father Meinrad had arrived at Einsiedeln, but that there they regarded him as excommunicated.

Father Meinrad arrived at Rome on February 11. He first called on the Prior of Sant' Anselmo. After speaking briefly with Father Meinrad, Father Prior told Father Thomas to speak to him, but kindly. He instructed Father Thomas to listen to Father Meinrad's story and tell him he had chosen the wrong way and that he should return at once to his monastery. Father Prior and Abbot Flugli, the Procurator General of the Order, did the same.

With the Prior's consent, Father Thomas finally gave Father Meinrad this alternative: "Either you drop the whole affair and subject yourself, and, as much as it can be done, make amends, or, in case you want to bring suit, I will get ahead of you at the pertinent tribunal and set the whole affair, including your role in it, in the right light."¹⁸ After that ultimatum, Father Meinrad was ready to sign a petition to the Sacred Penitentiary, drawn up by Father Thomas, to obtain—at least up to the time that he could approach his Abbot—absolution from excommunication and removal of the

¹⁸ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives. (This letter to Abbot Fintan, Feb. 16, 1893, and others from him are in folder *Thomas Weikert, O.S.B.*).

irregularity he had incurred. Father Meinrad did not wait for a response to the petition; he left Rome on February 22 with nothing more accomplished than his having spoken with two officials of the Sacred Penitentiary.

The Penitentiary communicated to Abbot Flugli its answer to the petition. It stated that if there were question of an excommunication *a iure*, the Penitentiary would take action, but since there was question of an excommunication *ab homine*, the Sacred Congregation, though it could remove it, for good reasons left such an action to Abbot Fintan.

Greatly disappointed, Father Meinrad returned to his monastery, where he was freed from the censures he had brought upon himself.

But soon he again became a cross to the Abbot and the community. To appreciate Abbot Fintan's position, one must keep in mind that it was one thing to have a feeling that Father Meinrad was approaching insanity—an illness which, if not induced, could at least have been fostered by his stubborn determination and his other shortcomings—but it was another thing to furnish medical proof of insanity. Such proof was necessary if he was to be consigned to a hospital for the mentally ill.

On July 29, 1895, Father Meinrad sent the following characteristic note to Father Prior during Abbot Fintan's absence:

For weighty reasons which unfortunately I can communicate to neither you nor Abbot Fintan, I find myself forced to ask your permission to leave the Abbey at any time you appoint between now and the first of Sept. next. I suggest that you make the request known to Abbot Fintan but not to the Br. Porter or any of your special favorites. A written or oral answer solicited at your convenience.

fr. Mnr McCy.

Father Benno let him know that nobody would forcibly prevent him from leaving, but that he would not have permission to do so.¹⁹ Yet he left, and so again incurred censure.

¹⁹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 13, folder, *Rev. Benno Gerber, O.S.B.* ("Mnr McCy to P. Prior, July 29, 1895"; the Prior's answer on the reverse page; P. Benno to Abbot Fintan, Aug. 12, 1895).

Father Meinrad next wrote to Abbot Fintan from Wyoming. He asked for credentials empowering him to ask for faculties to take up pastoral work; but he shrewdly did not want to be secularized. Abbot Fintan answered that he was empowering any priest of Father Meinrad's choice and in good standing to absolve him from the censures he had incurred anew.

Shortly thereafter, Father Meinrad wrote again that no work was offered him in Wyoming, and he asked Abbot Fintan to procure a place for him. "Justice is due, and justice I will have," he tartly remarked.

He should have been careful with that demand. Yet, with the patience of Job, Abbot Fintan gave him a choice of three places: the new monastery at Devils Lake, North Dakota, begun by Father Vincent Wehrle and in need of help; the mission at Stephan, South Dakota, in care of Father Pius Boehm and his confreres from St. Meinrad; or New Engelberg Abbey, at Conception; but Father Meinrad was first to write and assure Abbot Fintan that he had taken the pledge to abstain from alcoholic beverages—a resolution called for in his case—and he was to tell the Abbot which place he had decided upon, so that the Abbot could make proper arrangements. Without complying with either of the conditions, Father Meinrad simply showed up at Stephan, where for a year he was a sore trial to Father Pius and his staff by his independent and eccentric conduct. Abbot Fintan finally wrote to Father Pius and told him he was ordering Father Meinrad to leave the mission; because he had left the monastery illegally three times, the Abbot wrote, the community would protest against his returning, and, since he wanted to be independent, he should find a place for himself. Abbot Fintan sent Father Meinrad orders to that effect on June 14, 1897. But Father Meinrad refused to leave the missions.

When in autumn, 1898, Father Pius had to be absent from the mission for some time, he put Father Ambrose in charge. But Father Meinrad acted as though he himself were in charge, intent upon conducting affairs according to his ideas.

Upon his return, Father Pius on November 21 gave Father Meinrad traveling money and demanded that he leave the mission. Thereupon Father Meinrad presented his case to the Apostolic Delegate.

Since Abbot Athanasius had meanwhile succeeded Abbot Fintan, the Delegate, having requested and obtained information from the Abbot and Father Pius, wrote to the Abbot on December 13, 1898: "I can readily understand how annoying his conduct must be to you and the rest of your Fathers. However, considering his advanced age . . . I would suggest that you try to be as lenient as possible to him. . . ."

Upon Abbot Fintan's death, Abbot Athanasius, with great kindness, induced Father Meinrad to return to the monastery. At first, Father Meinrad was loud in his praise of all he saw at St. Meinrad. At last St. Meinrad had a real Abbot and affairs were conducted as they should be! So Father Meinrad informed one of his clerical acquaintances.

But before long, he turned against Abbot Athanasius, too, and made another appeal to the Apostolic Delegate. On November 24, 1899, the Delegate informed the Abbot:

I have replied to him simply that it is his duty to obey implicitly and cheerfully the orders of his superiors. As to your attitude toward him, I can only say that I know that an almost heroic patience will be necessary, but I am sure that you will be as kind as possible to him, considering his advanced age, and the evidently disturbed state of his mind.

When the symptoms of insanity could no longer be mistaken, Abbot Athanasius called a physician to examine the unfortunate man. The doctor made out a written, legal statement, dated November 24, 1899, which stated that the patient was "of unsound mind."²⁰ And so Abbot Athanasius had Father Meinrad committed to an institution that the Alexian Brothers conducted in St. Louis; there Father Meinrad died on June 16, 1914.

It was during his harrassing experiences with Father Meinrad that Abbot Fintan was working on the Constitutions for the Congre-

²⁰ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Rev. Meinrad McCarthy*.

gation and was corresponding with Rome about their approval. During this period, also, the new monastic chapel, with the library above it, was built, from 1892 to 1893. The Annex was completed in 1894, and the large extension to the north, connecting the former monastery with the present Abbey church, was begun in 1895 and finished in 1896. While this last building was still under construction, Abbot Fintan was already occupied with plans for a worthy Abbey church. He had engaged Brother Adrian, O.F.M., of the Sacred Heart Province, St. Louis, as architect. Brother Adrian had the plans of the church finished by the end of 1895.²¹ For all this construction Abbot Fintan had, in Father Benno Gerber, an able Building Master. However, financial strain and sickness prevented Abbot Fintan from going ahead with the construction of the church; but he did order excavation to be begun.

Though small of stature, Abbot Fintan had what he called "an iron constitution." There seemed to be no limit to his working capacity. But he developed an alarming cough in April, 1894, and it lasted almost three months. The community feared that he was suffering from tuberculosis; yet he conducted several retreats and preached. The malady turned into what was thought to be bronchial catarrh—in reality it was tuberculosis. In spite of a violent cough, Abbot Fintan conducted the Forty Hours Devotion in Evansville and in Ferdinand in the early part of November.

On November 13, pneumonia set in. "His loss," Father Isidor wrote to Abbot Frowin, "would pain me more than the conflagration of the monastery." On November 18, there seemed to be a turn for the better, though the physicians were reserved in their judgment. From November 20-21, Bishop Chatard visited the patient and was optimistic; the Bishop had formerly studied medicine.

On December 17, Abbot Fintan himself wrote to Abbot Frowin that he was recovering, though slowly, and that the physician had counseled him to spend the winter in the South. He left for the Priory in Gessen on January 17, 1895, and was back at St. Meinrad on

²¹ Conception Abbey archives. (Abbot Fintan to Abbot Frowin, Dec. 12, 1895).

the following November 2. There does not seem to have been much improvement in his condition; he regretted that in choir he could not recite aloud and that he could not sing a High Mass or preach.

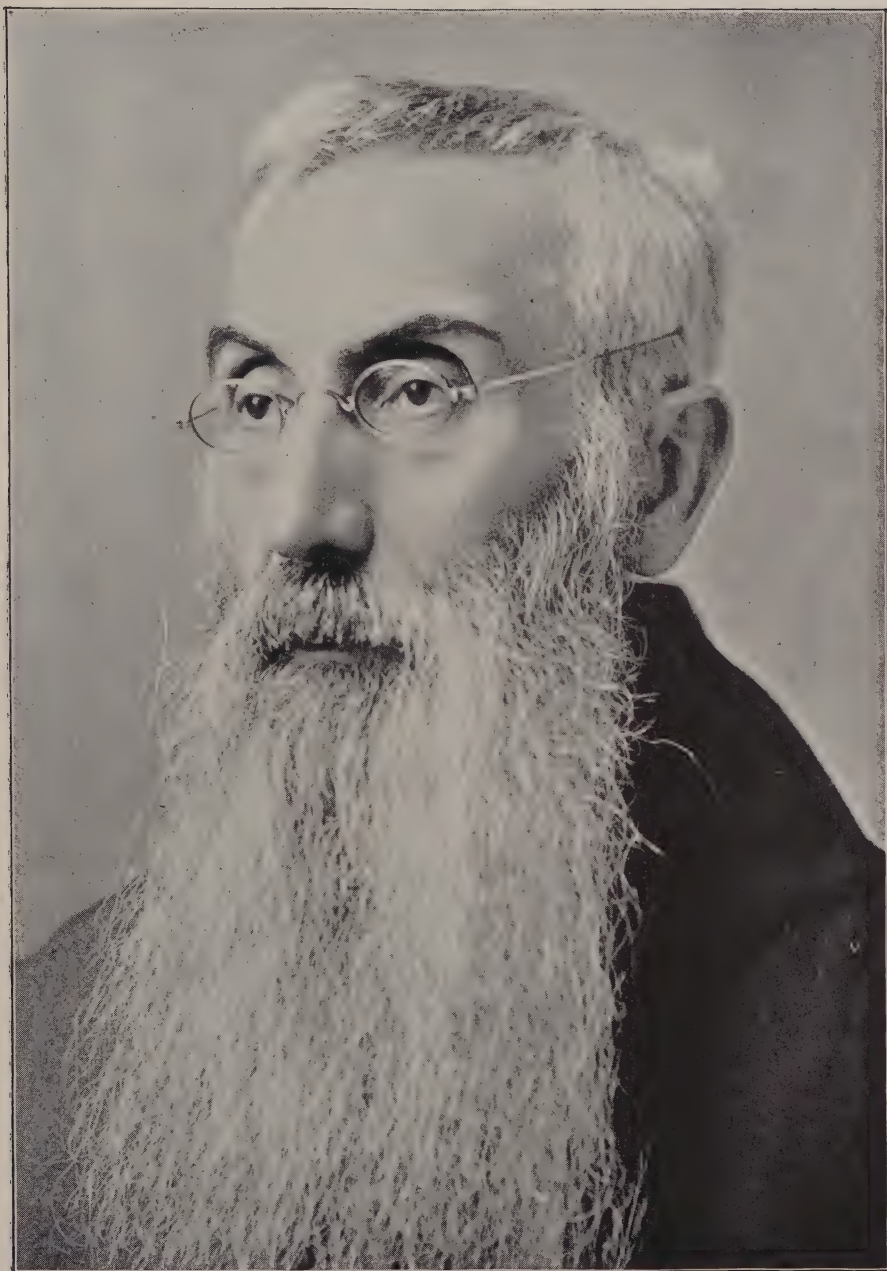
In the summer of 1896 he had intended to conduct the retreat at Conception, but eventually he had to send Father Alphons Leute instead. On the advice of a physician he went to New Mexico, both to benefit by its healthful air and to acquaint himself personally with the possibilities of a new foundation there. He was about to return home on August 17 when the hernia, from which he had been suffering a long time, made a surgical operation necessary.

On September 19, while he was on his way home, he received the news of the death of Bishop Martin Marty. His own weakness notwithstanding, Abbot Fintan made ready to go to St. Cloud, Minnesota, to attend the funeral; but at the last moment his ailing condition forced him to put aside the thought of this act of fraternal devotedness. On March 12 of the previous year he had mourned the death of the congenial and intrepid—though never strong—pioneer, Father Isidor, also his fellow Novice, whose passing away had been like the peaceful gloaming that crowns a rich harvest day. Writing to Abbot Frowin, Abbot Fintan said that these two deaths and his own frailty cautioned him to be ready for death. "*Media vita in morte sumus.*"²²

On Easter Sunday, 1897, Abbot Fintan celebrated Pontifical High Mass for the last time. After Christmas his strength ebbed away rapidly. Always known for his devotion to the Blessed Eucharist—when well he would spend hours before our Lord—he continued to spend long periods of prayer before the tabernacle even during the years of his illness, when he had grown so feeble that he could scarcely walk or kneel.

On the feast of St. Scholastica, February 11, 1898, he received the Sacraments of the Dying from the hands of the Prior. The entire community was present. Then he renewed his religious Vows and made a Profession of Faith. Always zealous for the temporal wel-

²² Conception Abbey archives. (Letter dated Sept. 22, 1896).



FATHER ISIDOR HOBI, O.S.B., †MARCH 12, 1895

fare of his monastery as well as for the spiritual, he urged that the excavations for the church be continued and that its construction be started as soon as conditions would permit. Finally, he spoke a few touching words to his confreres and for the last time gave them his fatherly blessing.

His condition showed a slight improvement during the earlier part of February 14. At that time, a young Frater, passing by the room and noticing that the door was slightly open and that for the moment no attendant was in the room, tiptoed in. As the Abbot's eyes turned toward him, the Frater somewhat shyly said something about the Abbot going to heaven. In a weak voice the Abbot slowly said: "*Quid sum miser tunc dicturus! Quem patronum rogaturus!*"—then, after a slight pause and with emphasis on each syllable—"Cum vix iustus sit securus!"

It was a great consolation to the dying Abbot when, at half past four in the afternoon, Bishop Chatard came again to visit him. Upon stepping out of the carriage, the Bishop went at once to the room of the sick Abbot. After expressing his gratitude to Abbot Fintan for what he had done for the Diocese and adding a few words of spiritual comfort and a promise to come again in the evening, the Bishop left the room.

Shortly thereafter, the two Brothers in attendance noticed an alarming turn in the condition of the patient, who, clothed in his religious habit, was seated in an armchair. The community quickly assembled and the Bishop returned. Father Henry Hug began the prayers for the dying. During the prayers of the Church, Abbot Fintan's pious soul gently and quietly, as he had lived and worked, returned to its Creator.²³ It was six o'clock in the evening.

²³ *Paradiesesfrüchte. Neue Folge: IV Band, No. 3 (März, 1898).* pp. 65-68; *St. Meinrads-Raben, Beilage zu Paradiesesfrüchte, Jhrg. XI, No. 3 (März, 1898), "Die Leichenfeier des hochw. sten Abtes Fintan in St. Meinrad"; The Columbian Record, 1898, Feb. 17 and 24.* These sources also describe the funeral services, at which Bishop Joseph Rademacher, of Fort Wayne, was celebrant of the Pontifical Requiem, Archbishop William H. Elder assisting at the throne. After the Requiem, Abbot Frowin, of Conception, in his sermon spoke of the life, virtues and merits of his departed confrere. And then Archbishop Elder,

Thirty-one years later, Father Nazar Werner wrote concerning his memories of St. Meinrad: "Of all memories the most holy is that of Abbot Fintan, a man holier than whom I have not known."²⁴

by reason of the personal regard he entertained for the deceased Abbot, arose and spoke briefly on the exalted character of the religious state and on the necessity of furthering vocations to that state by prayer. Official duties prevented Bishop Chatard from attending the funeral.

²⁴ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 9, folder, *Uruguay. Nueva Helvecia* (Rev. Nazar Werner to Fr. Cyril Gaul, O.S.B., July 17, 1929).

CHAPTER XIII

ABBOT ATHANASIUS SCHMITT, O.S.B. (March 16, 1898-JULY 12, 1932)

ON FEBRUARY 16, 1898, two days after Abbot Fintan's death, the members of the Chapter at home met to elect an Administrator, in keeping with the Constitutions then in force; it would be his office to conduct the affairs of the Abbey until the election of the next Abbot. Father Athanasius Schmitt, O.S.B., was elected.

Inasmuch as the President of the Congregation had died, Abbot Frowin, as Vice-President, commissioned the Administrator to set the date for the election of the next Abbot of St. Meinrad's Abbey. The Administrator determined upon March 16, 1898, and on February 21 letters were sent to those Chapter members who were absent from the monastery summoning them to come for the election; a copy of the form used was on the same day put on the Bulletin Board. On March 7, special letters, also signed by the Administrator and the Secretary and supplied with the seal of the monastery, were affixed to the door of the Oratory and of the Chapter room, where they remained until the day of the election. The Administrator ordered that special prayers be said for a happy issue of the election and that, the rubrics permitting, the oration to obtain the grace of the Holy Spirit be added in the daily Conventual Mass. In addition, on the day of the election itself, each Father of the monastery was to offer the Holy Sacrifice for the same intention.

On March 11 the Administrator briefly explained the procedure of the election; and, on March 15, a preliminary Chapter under the



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presidency of Abbot Frowin was held in the new Chapter room—the present sacristy—used for the first time on that occasion. In that Chapter various preliminary questions and difficulties, such as the ascertaining of the list of the electors, procuratorships for absent electors, and so forth, were settled.

On the morning of the election day, March 16, Abbot Frowin celebrated a Pontifical High Mass in honor of the Holy Spirit. After the Mass the Chapter members went in procession to the Chapter room. Chapter LXIV of the holy Rule ("Of the Appointment of the Abbot") and the first Declaration on it from the *Constitutions and Declarations* were read. Abbot Frowin briefly pointed out the importance of what was to be done and emphasized the responsibility resting on the Chapter members. Then the Secretary read the list of the electors as established in the meeting of the previous day. When the list had been duly certified, the President ordered the balloting.

On the first ballot, 36 of the 53 votes cast were for Father Athanasius Schmitt; the other 17 were divided among four other Fathers. With the assent of all, the election was pronounced unanimous and Father Athanasius accepted the decision of the Chapter. Each of the Fathers, including Abbot Frowin, put his signature to the *instrumentum electionis*.¹

An account of the election, together with a petition for its approval, signed by Abbot Frowin and the three Tellers, was sent to the Holy Father. On May 12, 1898, the Pope approved the election of Abbot Athanasius Schmitt, O.S.B.

The Solemn Blessing of the third Abbot of St. Meinrad took place in the old Abbey church on June 15, during the Pontifical High Mass celebrated by Bishop Francis Silas Chatard. Abbot Athanasius was assisted by Abbot Innocent Wolf, O.S.B., of St. Benedict Abbey, Atchison, Kansas, and by Abbot Frowin Conrad, O.S.B. Abbot Ignatius Conrad, O.S.B., preached in English and Father Chrysostom Theobald, O.F.M., Cincinnati, in German.²

¹ The documents and acts pertaining to the election and its approval are in the St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 2.

² *Paradiesesfrüchte* (St. Meinrads-Raben Jbrg. X, 1), Juli, 1898.

Joseph Schmitt—Father Athanasius had received the name “Joseph” in baptism—was the fifth child of a peasant family in Oberweissenbrunn, Unterfranken, Bavaria. His parents, Kaspar and Elizabeth Schmitt, had four daughters; but they prayed and hoped for a son. Their prayers were heard when on October 20, 1860, Joseph, their last child, was born.

Joseph attended the *Volksschule* in his home town. He wanted to become a priest, and so he took up higher studies at the Gymnasium conducted by the Augustinians in Münsterstadt. His career at the Gymnasium was not of the brilliant sort; whatever intellectual accomplishments may have been his were acquired the hard way.

As he approached his twentieth year of age, an important decision had to be made. With that year he was subject to compulsory military service. The obligation would have had to be complied with either by doing the regular three-year service or by entering the intensive and expensive one-year volunteer service. However, his father was too poor to defray the expenses of the one-year volunteer service, and he feared that the three-year service would endanger his son's vocation. And so he arranged for Joseph to leave Germany secretly on September 16, 1883, and to go to St. Vincent Abbey, Pennsylvania. Joseph Weikert, a more talented classmate and fellow countryman, went with him. They arrived at St. Vincent on October 1. There they were directed to go to St. John's Abbey, Minnesota; but they decided to go to St. Meinrad instead. They arrived at St. Meinrad on October 18.

Joseph Schmitt received the religious habit on January 21, 1884, and he made his Simple Vows, receiving the name Athanasius, on January 21, 1885. He received Tonsure and Minor Orders from Abbot Fintan in Lent of 1886 and was ordained Subdeacon, *titulo mensae communis vel paupertatis ex privilegio*, by Bishop Chatard on June 15, 1886, in the church of the monastery of St. Meinrad. On June 19, 1886, in the church of St. Ferdinand, at Ferdinand, Bishop Chatard ordained him to the diaconate, and, five days later, on the feast of Corpus Christi, he ordained him a priest in the church of St. Joseph, at Jasper, Indiana. The young monk celebrated his first

Solemn High Mass on Sunday, July 4; on that occasion Abbot Fintan preached.

Father Athanasius had obtained his naturalization papers at an early date, on October 30, 1884, in the Perry County Circuit Court, Indiana. He took out his citizenship papers on October 18, 1888, in the Daviess County Circuit Court, Kentucky, for he was at the time assigned to missions in Kentucky.³

His seminary course had been overly condensed: his whole course in philosophy which, strangely enough, was taken during the first half of his Novitiate, was crowded into a little more than one semester; he began theology during the second half of his Novitiate and was ordained priest two and a half years from the beginning of his Novitiate. During the next scholastic year, 1886-1887, during which he very probably continued his studies in theology, he taught the third Latin class in the college.

So far as higher studies were concerned, Father Athanasius was not a man of intellectual accomplishments; he was, however, a man of great prudence, an asset which enabled him to form circumspect and keen judgments. This prudence was greatly aided by the care he took to gather and sift information. Especially as Abbot, he knew how to hold his impulses in check, so that his judgment would not be impaired. His prudence was a clear-sighted guide for his justice. He knew how to handle the most delicate situations in such a way that the difficulties almost seemed to adjust themselves. This prudence made him a good business manager, too; here he counted with realities and certainties, not with words and wishes. But at times, especially toward the end of his tenure of office, this prudence became excessive to the point of retarding or even preventing necessary action.

Father Athanasius was also a man of discreet moderation; he had the happy faculty of doing a thing without overdoing it.

On July 3, 1887, Abbot Fintan had sent him to Belleville, Illinois, to be the second Assistant to Father Benno. In September, 1887, he

³ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Athanasius Schmitt (III Abbas)* (Certificates of ordination; personal chronicle; his first and his second papers of citizenship).

was directed to go to Kentucky to take care of some poor missions, several of them German, such as the New Austria Colony, in Lincoln and adjacent counties. Bishop McCloskey, of Louisville, had been able to find no priest for these missions. In two of the missions Father Athanasius himself conducted the schools, for the poverty of the Catholics there made it impossible for them to hire teachers. From there he returned to St. Meinrad to make his solemn profession of Vows on January 21, 1888; but by April he was back again on his missions.

Since Abbot Fintan needed him very much for the teaching staff at St. Meinrad, he summoned him to be at hand for the opening of the scholastic year in September, 1888. Bishop McCloskey acknowledged the reasonableness of Father Athanasius' recall, but he deeply regretted it on account of the people; he spoke very highly of the work Father Athanasius had done on the missions and asked whether he could stay long enough to prepare the young people, especially those of the New Austria Colony, for their first Holy Communion and for Confirmation.⁴ Father Athanasius wrote to the Abbot that he could just barely subsist on the scant income in the missions, but that "for the love of God and of these immortal souls" he was ready to continue in that work. Abbot Fintan therefore extended Father Athanasius' leave of absence to February 1, 1889.

Abbot Fintan appointed Father Athanasius to be the first Rector of the commercial school, which St. Meinrad had transferred to Jasper in September, 1889. That first college—or academy, as it was later more appropriately called—was built onto the western end of the Rectory. But it became evident that the arrangement was not satisfactory, and so Father Athanasius built the large and substantial building, now the Providence Home, near the southwestern corner of the Catholic cemetery.

Father Athanasius was better qualified as a manager and superior than as a professor. He was a hard worker. His duties as professor, manager, and superior notwithstanding, he still found time

⁴ *Ibid.* (Bishop McCloskey to Fr. Athanasius, Sept. 1, 1888).

to play in the students' band. He played the alto horn. Father Athanasius had a long, chestnut-brown beard. Clothed in his old work-habit, he made a colorful figure marching with his band—"Sankt Jakobs Oel band," the people called it. He reminded the people of an advertisement that showed a venerable, long-bearded monk holding up a bottle of a popular patent medicine of those days called *Sankt Jakobs Oel*.

In the summer of 1895, Abbot Fintan recalled Father Athanasius to St. Meinrad and made him Rector of the Major Seminary, an office that he held until his election as Abbot.

Abbot Fintan, together with most of his monks, had worked heroically—and, in general, successfully—to overcome the handicaps to monastic observance created by the fire. In those efforts he was confronted by the two obstacles: first, partial lack of sufficiently qualified personnel; secondly, the many demands made upon him by the new foundations and the Indian missions, and by Bishops who were greatly in need of priests. As a consequence, the more competent of the comparatively few Fathers at home were heavily burdened with administrative duties or with classwork in the Minor and the Major Seminary. This state of affairs made regular attendance at the divine service quite difficult—at times all but impossible—for some of them.

Abbot Fintan's prolonged illness and ultimate death had made complete removal of the obstacles impossible. Abbot Athanasius likewise clearly saw how circumstances were hindering smooth monastic observance and he resolved to better the situation as much as possible. Besides encouraging vocations to religious life, he insisted that the Fraters complete the last year in theology before their ordination to the priesthood. Though he sent substitutes for the Indian missionaries in the Dakotas, he would generally not send additional monks, even though the missionaries urgently asked for more.

One of the Dakota Bishops, who wanted the Benedictines to take charge of missions for the white population, too, told the Abbot that St. Meinrad ought to do something for the missions. Abbot Athanasius in his reply pointed to what St. Meinrad had done and still

was doing for the missions, and he observed that the monastery had not committed itself to doing missionary work among the white population of the Dakotas but only among the Indians.⁵

Yet, when circumstances called for it, Abbot Athanasius knew how to make exceptions to his policy. Father Jerome, the veteran Indian missionary at St. Michael's, Devils Lake, was growing old and, in May, 1916, lay sick in a hospital; he needed a substitute. Father Sylvester Eisenman, O.S.B., ordained on May 25, 1916, was convalescing from tuberculosis when, at 4:15 o'clock in the afternoon of July 13, as the monks were coming from Vespers, the Abbot beckoned him to his room.

"So you are not very well!" "Perhaps not as well as I might be." "Well, the men in Dakota as a rule get quite well; yet Father Jerome is very sick. Are you ready to go to Dakota? It will be a life job. You will have to learn the Indian language. When will you be ready to go?" "Tomorrow." "Very well, you will go tomorrow."

And the afternoon of the next day Father Sylvester left for North Dakota. Of such stuff missionaries are made. The almost incredible saga of Father Sylvester's labors among the Indians is proof of the merits of his prompt obedience.

Father Jerome returned within a short time from the hospital. In August, 1918, Father Sylvester was ordered to exchange places with Father Ambrose, who had been attending the ten outlying missions in the district of Stephan Mission, South Dakota.

In addition to those missions there was another that won Father Sylvester's special sympathy. Abbot Martin, barred by Grant's "peace policy" from doing missionary work on the Yankton Reservation, had in 1877 started St. Ann's Mission just west of it, near Wheeler, South Dakota. When the "peace policy" had been revoked and, years later, several Indians who had been baptized by Father De

⁵ The author does not have this incident from archival sources, but he records it as he remembers it from a casual conversation he had with Abbot Athanasius.

Smet were looking for a missionary, Father Henry Westropp, S.J., from St. Francis Mission, Rosebud Reservation, started St. Paul Mission on the Yankton Reservation. Starting with November, 1911, Father Westropp visited this mission two or three times a year.

In 1913, a small church was built on the mission by the Marquette League with \$1,100 left by a Mrs. Haggarty, a poor seamstress of New York, and, on November 14, 1914, Father Westropp came to reside on the mission. When, after about one year and a half, the Jesuits informed the Bishop that they could no longer take care of the mission, Bishop O'Gorman asked Father Ambrose, at Stephan Mission, to do what he could for St. Paul and two other missions on the Yankton Reservation.

St. Paul was 140 miles of dirt road distant from Stephan; yet Father Ambrose, in addition to his care for the ten missions in the Stephan district, undertook to visit the three missions on the Yankton Reservation once a month. It was a mistake of the Bishop and Father Ambrose not to have consulted Abbot Athanasius when the arrangement was made.

Father Sylvester's zeal at times outstripped even that of his Model-T Ford. When he had come into the mission field of South Dakota and, on his monthly visit to the distant St. Paul Mission, with its 300 converts, had visualized the possibilities for good on the Yankton Reservation, he exerted himself to the utmost in its behalf.

He saw that the mission chapel was wholly inadequate for accommodating all the faithful, and wondered how he might remedy the situation. He found that the pastor in the neighboring town of Wagner had built a brick church. That left the old, well-built frame church, which measured 30 by 50 feet, standing idly on an adjoining lot. Toward the end of September, 1918, Father Sylvester bought the old church, with sacristy attached, for \$700. He made preparations to transfer the large building, just as it was, over fourteen miles of ordinary roads and prairie to his mission—a task that would have done honor to the angels that transferred the holy House at Loreto. Since the project would demand his prolonged stay at St. Paul Mission, Father Sylvester took up residence in the tiny sacristy attached

to the old chapel on his mission. After two months and four days of turtlelike progress and a number of close catastrophes, the pilgrim church arrived at the mission to the acclamations of the Indians—men, women, and children—and of other sight-seers.

Meanwhile, Father Pius, the Superior of the central mission at Stephan, complained to the Abbot that, because of Father Sylvester's prolonged absence, the missions in the Stephan district were not receiving enough attention. The Abbot accordingly wrote to Father Sylvester that he had too much work; he should inform the Bishop, he told him, to send some other priest to St. Paul Mission and he himself should restrict his labors to the Crow Creek and the Lower Brule Missions, as had been done previously. But the Bishop replied that he had no priest for St. Paul. Father Sylvester took it upon himself to appeal to the Jesuits; they, too, could spare nobody.

In compliance with the Abbot's orders to leave the Yankton Reservation, Father Sylvester had already sent his personal effects to Stephan when, on the last day, a delegation of the Indians informed him that they were going to St. Meinrad to petition the Abbot to let him stay at their mission. The delegation consisted of Thunder Horse, Yellow Bird, and Zephir. Father Sylvester gave them a simple letter of introduction, but he did not build up their hopes.

Nevertheless, Abbot Athanasius received the delegation kindly—it was in May, 1921—and granted their request, even though it meant his sending another Father to replace Father Sylvester at Stephan. The Abbot sent Father Justin Snyder, O.S.B., who departed for his new field of work in August, 1921.

From that time on, Father Sylvester devoted himself to St. Paul and its own group of missions. When shortly thereafter he applied for a post office at his mission, he submitted Marty as its name, in honor of Abbot and Bishop Marty.

The work that Father Sylvester accomplished at Marty within the next twenty-seven years was truly astounding. But he was not a man who merely directed; he was one of the hardest workers of all until, on September 14, 1947, he was called to his reward prematurely, but well prepared, in the fifty-eighth year of his life. In

life, Father Sylvester's heart beat for the Indians; in death it rests with them in the cemetery of his beloved mission.⁶

Abbot Athanasius recalled the Brothers from the missions—even Brother Giles, while the Abbey church was being built—because suitable monastic observance was too difficult for them there and because they were needed very much at St. Meinrad. Otherwise, laymen would have had to be hired to do work in the monastery itself. Finally, except for vacation substitutes and men to conduct Forty Hours' Devotion—a work in which St. Meinrad had delighted from its beginning—he tended to restrict the granting of substitutes for secular priests. In all this, his policy was to make St. Meinrad strong at its center and to avoid expanding its external activities at the expense of monastic life at home. Reasonable and praiseworthy as his policy was, it was not appreciated by everyone. But Abbot Athanasius happily adhered to his resolute program.

In due time, the good effects of his policy became apparent in every phase of monastic life, especially in the divine service. Since the beginning of the public recitation of the Divine Office, in 1858, St. Meinrad had never neglected the *Opus Dei*, not even on the tragic day of the fire; but the lack of a larger number of competent voices at times told on the external splendor of liturgical functions. With a gradual increase in vocations it was possible to lighten burdens and

⁶ The foregoing is only a summary of Fr. Sylvester's own account of one episode of his missionary career. One night, as the author was sitting with him on the front porch of the Fathers' house at Marty, he asked Father Sylvester how he had come to build up Marty. In his slow, deliberate way Fr. Sylvester began by telling of Father Abbot's commissioning him to go to Dakota. The conversation has here been reproduced verbatim. As Fr. Sylvester began to speak of his activity among the Indians, the author became aware of so many points of wider interest that he hesitated to commit it all merely to memory or casual notes. And so he requested the missionary to dictate it to his secretary. At first, Fr. Sylvester would not hear of that—to him it looked too much like talking about himself—but in the end he yielded to the argument that the interests of St. Meinrad's Abbey and of its Indian missions must take precedence over his reluctance to have his name put into the foreground when the honor and glory of God are concerned.

bring about a larger attendance at choir and, naturally, a greater solemnization of the liturgy.

A talented and schooled young musician, Anselm Meier, had been in charge of the music department since about 1885. He not only reorganized the band and orchestra but also conducted the choir, for which he composed many works, approximately a hundred, both liturgical and entertaining. He was ordained a priest on March 20, 1886, two years and two months after his simple profession of Vows. In addition to his work in the music department he was "Prefect," that is, Rector, of the Minor Seminary from September, 1888, until June, 1890. He died of a heatstroke on June 28, 1890, in the thirtieth year of his life, both respected and loved by all who came into contact with him.

After Father Anselm's death, Abbot Fintan appointed Father Vincent Wagner, O.S.B., to be choir director. Early in 1892 Father Vincent spent nearly two weeks in Beuron to hear how the Gregorian chant was sung there. But, though he found the celebration of divine service at Beuron very dignified and edifying, the interpretation of the chant did not appeal to him. He wrote to a confrere—somewhat obscurely, it would seem: "It is sung indeed very fluently—much faster and lighter than we sing at St. Meinrad—but, as it appears to me, much more pointedly and *marcato* [*viel abstassender* [?] *und markanter*], so that scarcely any stress is put upon the word accent." He thought that the chant as he had heard it in the Cathedral at Mainz, where it was sung "with more feeling, would appeal more to the people." Accordingly, Father Vincent and subsequent choir directors at St. Meinrad, though advocating a fluent rhythm, have up to the present day insisted upon a judicious musical interpretation of the text together with observance of both word and phrase accents.

Abbot Athanasius retained Father Vincent Wagner as choir director. Father Vincent was gifted with extraordinary musical talent and a delicate sense of the function of voice and instrument in liturgical functions. Harmony and counterpoint seemed to come to him more by intuition than by schooling. His motets are a fine musical

interpretation of the sacred text, and most of his compositions for the organ are religious lyrics—calm and peaceful.

In connection with Father Vincent's contribution to church music at St. Meinrad, mention should also be made of his younger confrere, Father Thomas Schaefers, O.S.B. Father Thomas, too, had innate talent for music. Father Vincent guided and counseled him in his musical development as an organist and composer. Father Thomas also directed a choir of more than seventy seminarians from both the Major and the Minor Seminary. He, too, composed several church motets. The present day zealous choir directors and other musicians at St. Meinrad have a sound tradition to uphold.

Even apart from the chant, Father Vincent practiced occasionally with the monastic choir to obtain a smooth and fluent recitation of the Divine Office. Father Abbot himself attended such practices.

With regard to the chant, the whole monastic choir had been singing both the Common and the Proper of the Mass. Father Vincent felt that the Proper of the Mass (the Introit, Alleluia, and so on) would be sung in an aesthetically more perfect manner by a picked group of competent singers. And so, when the new Abbey church was put into use, in 1907, he introduced the practice of having a small group of monks (the *Schola*) sing the Proper of the Mass. The result was very gratifying. But in 1950 the practice was resumed of having the entire monastic choir sing certain parts of the Proper of the Mass in addition to the singing of the Common.

Until declining health confined him to his room, Abbot Athanasius habitually joined the community also in recreation. He not only enjoyed listening to a humorous story, he himself would contribute to a pleasant conversation.

Even a Novice could feel at ease in the presence of Abbot Athanasius. During the summer of 1899 he had temporarily taken over the instruction of the Novices. Speaking of hardships in monastic life, he told them in one of the instructions that "in the monastery one is not bedded on roses." Noticing an amused expression on the face of one of the Novices, the abbot said to him: "Have you been bedded on roses?" The Novice felt free to answer: "No, I got a

straw sack." "Ho, ho!" chuckled the Abbot. In those days the Abbey did not yet have spring beds and mattresses.

The building of a worthy Abbey church was a task that Abbot Athanasius had inherited from his predecessor. The plans, made by Brother Adrian, O.F.M., were at hand, and excavations for the crypt to be built into the rocky hillside and for the approach to it from the east had been begun. Examination of the plans revealed that over and above the space needed for the monastery there would not be enough seating capacity for the students of the Major and the Minor Seminary and for the people, even though a gallery with a depth of about 14 feet stretched across the rear of the nave. But since the church was to accommodate all, the gallery had to be brought out over the whole rear square of the nave. To avoid sacrificing more interior space, Abbot Athanasius had the architect design two round towers, flanking the facade, as an ascent to the gallery. Eventually, as the number of students increased, a second gallery of equal dimensions had to be constructed above the first one. The timber construction supporting the roof over each aisle had to be changed to create passageways connecting the galleries above either side of the monks' choir with the rear galleries. Though a necessity, the rear galleries considerably disturb the symmetry of the interior of the church.

Another point of special care to Abbot Athanasius was the fact that at his election the Abbey still had a debt of \$25,366.73. The debt was not large in itself, but the sources of income were scant. That difficulty the Abbot countered with strict economy; he was known not to let a penny escape his attention. For example, from month to month, over a period of seven years, small donations came in through the *Paradiesesfrüchte*; in time, those donations amounted to an appreciable sum. And of course a great asset to the building activity of the Abbey were its stone quarry and its forests.

Father Benno directed and supervised the whole job of building the church. A number of the Brothers worked as stonecutters and carpenters; of the latter, Brother Joseph Schaeuble was a particularly great help to Father Benno. Brother Joseph made patterns for all the

carved stonework, built exact supporting forms for the stone and brick arches, and devised the timberwork for the roofs and steeples. Father Benno candidly acknowledged that without Brother Joseph he could not have built the church; but Brother Joseph was as humble as he was efficient.

The church was designed in a majestic and graceful romanesque style. A cross-section through the base line of the nave and the two aisles, including the walls, measures 68 feet and 6 inches. The height of the main twin towers is 168 feet. The towers are outstandingly beautiful specimens of romanesque architecture. Within the church, the nave rises from the floor to the cross-vaults to a height of 60 feet.

The stonecutters began dressing stone in early spring, 1899. The work had to be done with chisel and mallet, for as yet no saws or compressed air hammers were available.

On June 16, 1899, the first stone was laid. On August 15, 1900, the Auxiliary Bishop of Indianapolis, Denis O'Donaghue, blessed and laid the cornerstone. It is a large stone, marked with a cross, just north of the main entrance.

Building activity—except for the work done in the quarry—was suspended during the winter seasons, and so progress was slow.

During the winter of 1902-1903, Brother Joseph and his associates had worked on the huge wooden arches that were to span the nave and aisles. The arches had been finished and were stacked in a large carpenter shop built over the power house. But at 7:30 in the evening of March 26, fire broke out in the power house, rose quickly to the carpenter shop, and in a short time consumed the entire shop. A new shop was built about 150 feet south of the power house. There arches had to be made a second time.

By the end of 1904, the church was under roof. The spires of the two large towers were covered with copper, the rest of the building with slate. The whole building had up until then cost \$50,000. Needless to say, this sum did not include the material and labor furnished by the Abbey. However, the chief outlays of money were,



THE FORMER MAJOR SEMINARY, THE ABBEY, AND THE NEW CHURCH, 1907

of course, to come with the expenses involved in the work within the church.

The pews, the choir stalls, and two carved galleries above the monks' choir were put in the church in February and March, 1907. This woodwork was manufactured by the North American Seating Company. The two rear galleries, the majestic throne, the carved vestment cases in the sacristy, the massive doors, and other woodwork, with the exception of the wooden altars and the confessionals, were designed and made at the Abbey. The carved baldachins over the rear row on either side of the choir stalls were removed some decades later.

The stained glass windows in the crypt and in the clerestory of the church were made by the Emil Frei studio, St. Louis. The lower windows of the church and two over the main altar were obtained from the studio of F. X. Zettler, Munich.

On March 21, 1907, the feast of St. Benedict, the community entered the church in procession for the first time: "I rejoiced because they said to me, 'We will go up to the house of the Lord' " (Ps. 121, 1). Abbot Athanasius blessed the church. After tierce had been chanted, the Abbot celebrated a Pontifical High Mass, during which he received the solemn profession of vows of one of the monks. That afternoon, at three o'clock, the Blessed Sacrament was transferred in solemn procession from the old church (until then used by the parish) to the new Abbey church. Solemn benediction with the Blessed Sacrament was given and the *Te Deum* was sung.⁷

The electropneumatic organ of the church has 3 manuals, 55 ranks, and 3,015 pipes. It was made by the Estey Company, Brattleboro, Vermont. It is housed in the two galleries above the monks' choir. The organ was used for the first time on the first anniversary of the blessing of the church (March 21, 1908).⁸

The Abbey eagerly awaited the arrival of the main altar, made in the studio of J. J. Deplaz, Regensburg, Bavaria. When it finally

⁷ *Paradiesesfrüchte (St. Meinrads-Raben)*, April, 1907.

⁸ *Ibid.* April, 1908.



THE ABBEY CHURCH, 1907, AND THE NEW MAJOR SEMINARY, 1922

arrived at the nearby Johnsburg station, on August 11, 1908, two marble slabs were found broken. The shipment had been in a wreck between New York and Huntingburg, and the railroad company declared its readiness to refund the freight and to make good the damage. The marble sections were reordered from Italy, and they arrived in good condition on March 16, 1909.

The base of the stipes, the shafts of the pillars, the mensa, and the gradin, are of quite rare, mild gray-blue Carrara marble; the gradin is inlaid with a pattern of variously colored stones on a gold background; the stipes, upon which the rear of the mensa rests, is white Carrara marble very slightly tinged with a gentle blue, with a mosaic *Agnus Dei* on a gold background and, to either side, designs of inlaid marble of appropriate colors. The metal bases and capitals of the shafts of the pillars and the metal for the whole superstructure—the tabernacle, exposition throne, and reredos—are of tombac, a hard alloy of copper and zinc. The surfaces are discreetly enlivened with filigree and partly embossed, partly engraved patterns; the whole is heavily fire-gilded. The figures of the Saints in the niches of the altar were chosen by reason of their special relation to the Blessed Sacrament; the figures are executed in champlevé enamel. The splendor of the work is enhanced still more by a judicious use of rock crystals, amazonites and other ornamental stones and mother-of-pearl.⁹ Deplaz patterned the altar and its execution on the shrine of the Three Holy Kings in the Treasury Chamber of the Cologne Cathedral. The shrine of the Three Kings, made about the year 1200, is considered one of the greatest products of goldsmith and enamel art in Europe during the Middle Ages.

No very adequate idea of the beauty of this altar can be obtained merely from a description of it; it must be seen. It is truly a realization of the verse contained in the golden, raised letters in the arch spanning the exposition throne: *Ecce thronus magni fulgescit Regis et Agni* (See, the radiant throne of King and Lamb Eucharistic).

When the altar was finished and assembled in the studio of

⁹ *Paradiesesfrüchte*, 1909, pp. 81-84; 112-117; 146-152.



THE MAIN ALTAR

Deplaz, art connoisseurs from far and wide, both from the clergy (for example, Bishop Antonius of Regensburg), and from the laity (the Prince of Thurn and Taxis, high government officials, artists and people from the common walks of life), came to view it; and they were delighted with it. The Prince, himself a great lover of art, praised the work highly; he had only one objection: the altar was to be exported to the *Ausland*.¹⁰

Scarcely finished with the church, Abbot Athanasius set to building the wing in which are the Brothers' Oratory, the Chapter Room, and the Library. Father Benno was by now too old to continue the strenuous job, and so a younger Father, Augustine Haberkorn, now took over as building master.

The first stone for the new wing was laid on July 19, 1911. The extension was to be the first fireproof building at St. Meinrad; for this reason, all the floors and the roof were made of reinforced concrete; even the window casings and sashes were of metal, and the windowpanes contained meshed wire as a special protection against fire from without. These special precautions were taken mainly to protect the Library.

The building was finished by the end of 1914; the transfer of the books from the old Library to the new was made during the subsequent Christmas vacation. On March 3, the Brothers recited their office in the new Oratory for the first time; the new Chapter Room was used for the first time on March 5.

The very practical wooden arcade along both sides of this building and along the inner court was constructed only after the Major Seminary had been built; it is a temporary structure, to be replaced by a beautiful stone arcade, for which the plans are at hand.

When the construction work of the Library had been finished, work was begun on the concrete water tower, designed to replace the small wooden tower with its iron tank, which had been erected in 1891. The battlement top of the new tower was made according to a design submitted by one of the Fathers of the Abbey. The shaft

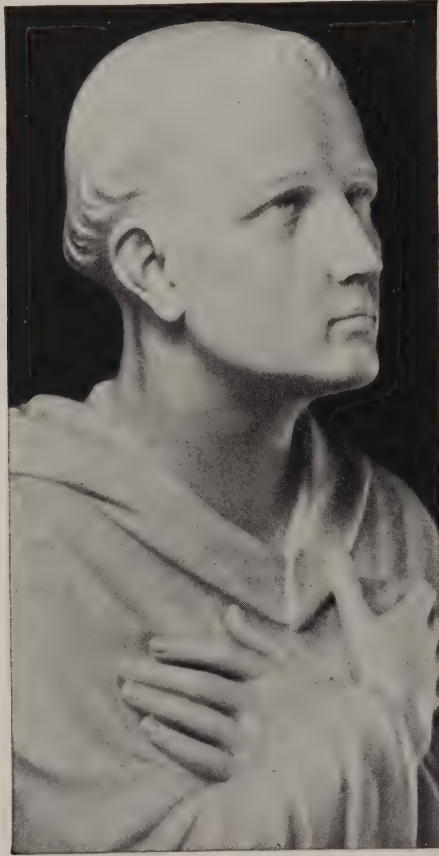
¹⁰ *Regensburger Anzeiger*, April 22, 1908, and conversation of Deplaz with the author.



REPLICA OF ALTAR IN THE *GNADEN-KAPELLE*
AT EINSIEDELN

Recently replaced by an altar of modern construction.

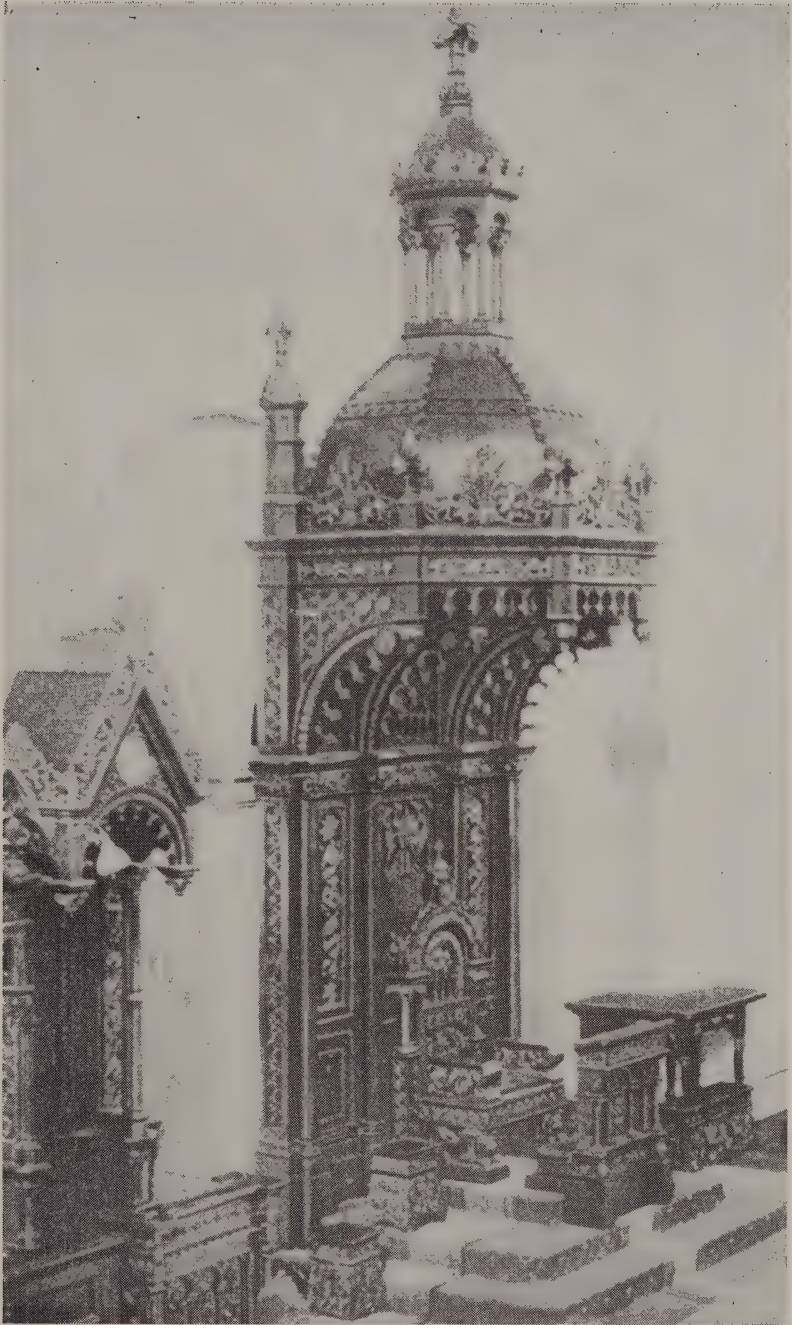
of the tower below the battlements is a cylinder 50 feet in diameter and 80 feet high and has a capacity of 500,000 gallons. The tower was finished on December 7, 1914.



ST. BENEDICT AS A YOUNG
HERMIT

Marble Statue in one of the grottoes
in the Crypt of the Church.

Since the old Major Seminary building had for some time been much too small, preparations to build a new Major Seminary were made immediately upon the completion of the water tower; it is a building that connects with the north wall of the former Minor Seminary and reaches to near the southwest corner of the church.



THE PONTIFICAL THRONE

First, in the early spring of 1915, the former chapel and library building was razed to the cellar vault. The west entrance wall and 241½ feet of that end of the cellar vault were taken down to make room for the eastern part of the projecting cross wing of the new building. The new major building project could safely be undertaken because, after the completion of the library building and of the water tower, the Abbey found itself comfortably out of debt, thanks to the very close management of Abbot Athanasius.

When the exterior of the new Major Seminary was finished, it presented a majestic and pleasing appearance. It was fireproof; no wood was used in any of its structural parts.

The increase in the number of students in the Major and Minor Seminaries for the 1922-23 scholastic year made the two Rectors look forward eagerly to the completion of the new building. As soon as the fourth floor was ready for occupation, forty-eight seminarians moved into it, on the feast of all Saints of the Order, November 13, 1922. The third (top) floor of the old Major Seminary and the Annex were immediately occupied by the students of the Minor Seminary. A small group of seminarians moved into the new building on March 22, 1923; the rest, on March 29.¹¹

To relieve the dormitory congestion in the old Minor Seminary, a half story with dormers was constructed over it during the summer of 1925. The construction of timber, steel laths and stucco also helped to balance the exterior appearance of the Minor Seminary with that of the Major. The structure was intended to be only provisional; eventually the whole section was to be rebuilt so as to be fireproof and in keeping with the architecture of the Major Seminary.

The Major Seminary was now finished, but nothing had as yet been done for its interior decoration or for cleaning up and beautifying the grounds about the seminary. But these two needs were eventually met, and much credit for the work accomplished is due to the alumni and to the seminarians of the period.

Father Joseph Weber, pastor of the church of the Assumption,

¹¹ Day-Book of St. Meinrad Seminary, Sept. 10, 1897-June 10, 1930, pp. 189; 191.



THE ABBEY, 1921

East View. Brothers at work in the Garden.

Indianapolis, always devoted to his Alma Mater, had given the Rector a metal statue for which he no longer had any use. After the statue had been cleaned of several coats of old paint, it was found to be very beautiful and was repainted. Aware of the devotion that the seminarians had to the Blessed Virgin, the Rector decided to place the statue in a prominent place within the new building. He designed a stone niche for it to be built at the end of the corridor, just beyond the Rector's office; his secondary purpose was to demonstrate the aesthetic quality of St. Meinrad sandstone for interior use, for up until then it had been used only as exterior building material.¹²

On May 10, 1923, at seven o'clock in the evening of the feast of the Ascension of our Lord into heaven, the seminary sodality held its regular devotions before the Blessed Sacrament exposed, in the old chapel. The statue, elevated on a decorated pedestal, stood in front of the sanctuary during the services. After reposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the statue was blessed, and the seminarians formed a procession. The four senior Deacons were flanked by a guard of honor consisting of a Deacon and of the Senior of each of the other five classes. They lifted the statue and the choir intoned the psalm "*Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi: In domum Domini ibimus.*" All alternated with the choir in chanting the psalm. As the procession moved through the new seminary, the *Magnificat* was chanted. When the procession had arrived at the niche on the second floor, the Celebrant (the Rector) spoke briefly of the privilege and need of having our Blessed Mother with us at all times. While the seminary quartet sang an *Ave Maria* composed by Father Thomas, the statue was lifted into its niche. All then sang the *Regina Coeli* and the glad "Holy God, we praise Thy name."

During the first eight years in the new seminary the seminarians, besides devoting themselves to their studies, imposed upon themselves heavy manual work. Their old recreation facilities had been

¹² The stone veneer work in the lobby of the major seminary was done years later.

taken over by the Minor Seminary. The major seminarians therefore made plans for new recreation facilities.

The incline west of the building was covered with briars and weeds and led down to a swampy little valley matted with brush and briars; farther on there were several acres that had been a pine grove—called “paradise”—which was now a tangle of honeysuckle, briars, and poison ivy.

The General Board, consisting of officers elected by the seminarians, with the Rector as Moderator, divided the seminarians into three groups, each group headed by a captain: the terrace group had for its field of development the grounds from the building down to the ditch that had to be dug first to drain the valley; the playgrounds group had for its field of work the terrain west of the ditch, including a part of the old apple orchard—the playgrounds had for the most part to be dug out of the hillside; the paradise group had to make out of paradise lost a paradise reclaimed.

During the first seven years most of the seminarians devoted nearly all the free afternoons on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the occasional free days to these projects. Most of the work had to be done by hoe, pick, and shovel; only occasionally could teams and scrapers be procured.

In those earlier years a number of seminarians helped greatly to procure the massive ornamental cross that adds much to the appearance of the front of the seminary. Mr. Thomas McGrath, president of the Interstate Cut Stone Company (Bedford, Indiana), visited the seminary in 1922 and encouraged the Rector to let him know if at some future time he should want to have a stone ornament for the seminary. Mr. McGrath promised to donate the work of his shop. The Rector made a detailed design of a cross which was to show forth the relation of the holy sacrifice of the Mass to the Cross of Christ. Mr. Frederic Erhart, an architect and friend of the Rector, was so pleased with the design that he asked to be permitted to make a blueprint of it, drawn to scale, as his contribution to the monument. Mr. Erhart improved upon the original design by making the cross considerably higher. Mr. McGrath was generous enough to donate



THE CROSS, SYMBOL OF CHRIST'S REDEMPTIVE SACRIFICE

the production of the enlarged cross. The seminary had merely to pay for the stone that he would have to purchase from the Bedford quarry.

A special cross committee began to function. An appeal to the alumni easily brought in more than the necessary funds, and the surplus was turned over to the Seminary Athletic Association.

The cross, a credit to the craftsmen who executed it in Bedford limestone, was solemnly blessed on May 9, 1924, the day before ordination. Many priests and laymen were present for the ceremony.¹³



RECREATION HALL OF MAJOR SEMINARY, 1930

Another important project, fostered by the Athletic Association, was the building of a worthy recreation hall, or gymnasium, in place of an old wooden building called the "shanty," which for generations had served the seminarians so long as they had used the old building. The Minor Seminary had built its recreation hall in 1925; but the Major Seminary had to defer its plans until the new building was finished and the most important work on the

¹³ *Ibid.* Pp. 201-203.

grounds was out of the way. In this undertaking, too, the seminarians—strongly supported by the Abbey, which donated the stone basement walls—did much work in raising funds as well as in excavating, in interior construction and furnishing. The seminarians intended to raise half of the requisite amount; the Rector's office provided the rest.

Construction of the new gymnasium was begun on November 20, 1928. The building was finished by the end of February, 1930.¹⁴

The ordination class of 1894 had formed a little organization of its own. The printed *Rules of the St. Meinrad's Alumni Union of 1894* determined as object of this union: "to foster mutual love and respect; to insure success in our vocation; to effect spiritual advancement." They were to meet "every five years"; annually to offer one Holy Mass for the union; and to offer five Holy Masses for a deceased member.

On December 13, 1895, the members of the senior class of theology (1895-1896) met to constitute themselves "into a class society": *The St. Athanasius Alumni Union of St. Meinrad's Seminary*. The Rector, Athanasius Schmitt, O.S.B., was an honorary member of the society. Apart from its printed constitutions there are no records to show how long it functioned or whether it was continued by subsequent senior classes.¹⁵

In February, 1911, the Major Seminary again made an effort to start an Alumni Association. Initial steps were taken, and Father Gregory Bechtold, O.S.B., Rector from 1898 to 1917, appointed a committee "for the purpose of preparing for the coming 'Alumni Association.'" A tentative list was made. Though photographs of the alumni were collected and association pins were distributed, the association did not materialize.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Ibid.* P. 273

¹⁵ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Alumni Association*.

¹⁶ The Catholic *Columbian Record*, 29, March 24, 1911, p. 8. From 1899-1902, during which time Fr. Gregory attended Sant' Anselmo, Rome, to obtain the doctorate in theology, Fr. Augustin Seiler, O.S.B., took his place as Rector.

In 1927, the successor to Father Gregory, Father Albert Kleber, O.S.B., 1917-1930, was asked by the class of 1909 to invite all the alumni to St. Meinrad for the purpose of organizing an association. Abbot Athanasius was not willing to lend his name for a third effort toward an alumni association, but he made no objections to the formation of such an association. The Rector informed the alumni that it would be their association, organized by them, and conducted by them, and that St. Meinrad would give it cordial support.

In answer to the invitation extended to them by the Rector, fifty-seven secular priests came, on February 21, 1927, despite the inclemency of the weather and the bad roads. There was a formal reception that evening, at which the Rector welcomed the alumni. On the next day, a Solemn High Mass was celebrated, with alumni of the secular clergy as Celebrant and Ministers. At the meeting that followed, a constitution was adopted. In the afternoon, officers were elected.¹⁷

Twenty-six years have elapsed since the formation of the St. Meinrad Alumni Association. It now has an active membership of 467 priests.

Another project of that time was the publishing of the *St. Meinrad Historical Essays*. Some of the term papers of the class in church history were of a quality that made them seem worthy of being published. The Professor of Church History, Father Cyril Gaul, O.S.B., was of the opinion that the alumni, especially the recently established association, would be interested enough to become subscribers. Upon consultation, a staff consisting of seminarians and of Father Cyril as Faculty Adviser was created. The first number of the first volume, containing eight "essays," appeared in May, 1928. Since gradually a number of essays other than in church history were accepted, the name was in the second number of volume 8, December, 1946, made more comprehensive: *St. Meinrad Essays*.

The seminarians of those days took a very active part in the foundation of another organization, one world-wide in scope: the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

This crusade was the idea of a cleric of the Society of the Divine Word, Techny, Illinois, by the name of Clifford King, at that time not yet ordained a priest. In the autumn of 1917 he sent out a brochure inviting Catholic Students to meet at Techny for the purpose of organizing a mission society. This brochure reached the Rector's office of the Major Seminary at St. Meinrad during the latter part of November. A year or two previous to that, the Rector had read a report of the activity of a similar society among the Catholic students of Germany. He had wished that students in the United States would have such a society, not merely for the benefit that the missions would derive from it, but also for the good that would accrue to the seminarians, inasmuch as it would foster in them an apostolic outlook for clerical life. When, therefore, he saw Frater King's brochure, he welcomed it. But the Rector felt that if such a society were imposed upon the seminarians from without, it would not find so vital a response as it would if the idea arose spontaneously among them. And so he merely marked the most important passages in the brochure and placed it on the table in the reading room. About two months later Frater King sent a circular letter in which he expressed his disappointment at the lack of reaction to his brochure: he had done his part, he wrote, the rest lay with the institutions. The Rector also marked that letter and placed it in the reading room.¹⁸

Some time thereafter, William Rachor, a very talented seminarian, of a quiet but firm disposition, came to the Rector's office and said that a number of the seminarians, for whom he came as spokesman, had talked over the contents of the brochure and circular letter and would like to do something to further Frater King's suggestion. The Rector, who had been waiting for exactly such a reaction on the part of the seminarians, gladly gave his approval. However, some of the seminarians had already been working in the interests of this

¹⁸ This report on the origin of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade (the C.S.M.C.) at St. Meinrad Seminary and on its contribution to the national organization rests upon correspondence and other material in the files of the St. Meinrad Unit and upon the personal contact of the author with that movement during its first thirteen years.

or that mission society. And so the Rector stipulated that, so far as St. Meinrad Seminary was concerned, the new movement might not be an appendage to any other home or foreign mission society but would have to be truly Catholic, that is universal, even as the Church itself is. He added that "study, prayer, and sacrifice" were to be the basic means for helping the mission cause of the Church: by study the seminarians were to inform themselves—and, as much as their status as seminarians permitted, also others—of the mission field and its needs; by prayer they were to lend their spiritual support; and by sacrifice they were to help the mission cause financially. But they were not to solicit funds from outside, he told them.

It is pleasant to record the intelligence and resoluteness with which those young men went to work. The St. Thomas Literary Society undertook sponsorship of the mission movement until it was ready for independent organization.¹⁹ The Literary Society devoted its whole meeting on April 7, 1918, to the new project. Several speakers spoke in favor of it from various angles. But it was William Rachor who emitted the electric spark that quickened the assembly to action when he ended his presentation and recommendation of the new crusade by saying emphatically: "God wills it, gentlemen. Let us not be found wanting." After due consideration, the Literary Society in a special meeting, on May 2, approved the "Report of Recommendations" of a special committee and created the Mission Crusade Bureau. On May 3, Paschal Hayden, as an officer of the new bureau, opened negotiations with Techny by sending the "Report of Recommendations."

Besides St. Meinrad, only three Major Seminaries had up until then responded to the invitation of Techny. On May 10, the St. Meinrad Mission Bureau sent a circular letter to nineteen seminaries and colleges throughout the country, urging them to send delegates to the meeting planned to open at Techny on June 27. William Rachor and Paschal Hayden, both Deacons then, and Charles Koerber volunteered to be delegates from St. Meinrad Seminary.

¹⁹ Minutes of the St. Thomas Literary Society.

At Techny, the Reverend Rachor was made Chairman of the Constitutions Committee. The principles upon which the St. Meinrad unit had been established were, through the efforts of Rachor, embodied in the constitutions. It was found that the organization plans formed at St. Meinrad corresponded almost exactly with Techny's original plans.

At Techny the delegates were also to determine upon a place for the Central Executive Office. In his enthusiasm, the Reverend Hayden was desirous of procuring that office for St. Meinrad Seminary, with its Rector as President and the seminarians dividing the work among themselves; he felt sure of enough votes to make the plan a reality. But the Rector told him: "No. This movement will grow beyond the capacity of St. Meinrad and it will eventually demand a special clerical staff." The Rector recommended Mount St. Mary Seminary, Cincinnati, where the movement would be under the patronage and guidance of Archbishop Moeller, who was at the head of the Hierarchy's Commission on Missions. And so the office of the Executive Board was established in Mount St. Mary Seminary; but it did not take long until that office had to be separated from the seminary and have its own special clerical staff, independent of the unit in the seminary.

This, briefly, is the part that the St. Meinrad Major Seminary took in the organizing of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade. Since that time, the St. Meinrad unit has always been very active in this mission movement. On May 18, 1919, no less important a man in the founding of this Crusade than Frater King himself wrote to the St. Meinrad unit:

The activities and achievements of the St. Meinrad Crusade Unit are a constant source of wonderment and edification to us at St. Mary's [Techny]. It must be, that, to reward the great good-will you manifested towards the Crusade when it was yet but a poor possibility, God has sent the spirit of St. Paul to inspire you with the remarkable apostolic zeal and unselfish devotion, which is so characteristic of your missionary activities.

The Treasurer of the Executive Board wrote, on February 23, 1919: "From the report it is evident that St. Meinrad will prove to be as important a factor in the ultimate success of the Catholic Students Mission Crusade as it was in the inauguration of the movement."

On December 13, 1920, the Reverend Frank Thill, the Secretary of the Executive Board, wrote to the Chairman of the St. Meinrad Unit:

The accomplishments of the St. Meinrad Seminary Unit in developing genuine mission spirit is truly phenomenal. Your men are among the strongest enthusiasts of the movement and it is due to this kind of activity that the Crusade is rapidly becoming a national organization. He wrote again, on November 17, 1921:

St. Meinrad Unit has always in my estimation been one of our strongest spread units. You men have been in the work 100% from the very beginning and if you continue the spread work of previous years I am sure that we can look for the same and ever greater results.

Shortly after the official establishment of the Crusade, the Reverend Mr. Hayden, an enthusiastic crusader, during his final scholastic year in the seminary had asked the rector for permission to organize units in academies and colleges for women. Very soon thereafter, Clement Bastnagel organized units in grade schools. But since grade-school pupils could not be called students in the sense originally intended, they were to be known as junior units. Both efforts were crowned with remarkable success.

These results were indeed very gratifying to all who had been interested in the Mission Crusade from its beginning. But as early as spring, 1919, there appeared signs of an approaching storm.

Unmindful of the regulation laid down by the Rector, the seminarian who during that semester headed the St. Meinrad Seminary Crusade Unit solicited church plate and even Mass stipends for the missions. This step was an imprudent one, no matter how well intended.

When the Catholic Church Extension Society heard of the matter, it complained to Bishop Chartrand, Indianapolis, about the new mission society in St. Meinrad Seminary. The complaint was in order so far as the imprudence of the step just mentioned was concerned. The General Secretary of the Extension, Monsignor E. Ledvina, wrote in a similar vein to Abbot Athanasius; he suggested that the Abbot use his "authority" and his "judgment as to what would be best to do, under the circumstances, if the continuation of any Students' Missionary Society in the Seminary . . . should be the cause of complaint from the older and larger Mission Societies." He hinted at the likelihood of a strong protest to be made in Rome. "This can, of course, be avoided, if common sense and good judgment will be employed by those who have the direction of these young men." The Abbot, always just and fair, placed the correspondence before the Rector. The Rector was thus given the welcome opportunity of correcting the mistake of the President of the local unit and of presenting an objective account of the Mission Crusade. The Abbot listened attentively, and then said with approval: "That is something else!" and he gave his blessing.

Bishop Chartrand, on his part, on March 31, 1919, wrote to the Rector of the seminary that there was to be no crusade among the students "except one, working directly through the Catholic Church Extension Society." When the Rector informed the Bishop of the real purpose of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade and pointed out the good that would result from it, the Bishop answered promptly on April 8: "(1) I am glad there is a missionary crusade among the students; (2) I want it to continue by all means; (3) I want it to work through the Catholic Church Extension Society."

But the Rector could deal with the Extension only concerning the Crusade Unit at the seminary. The Extension, on the other hand, now let it be known that it would deal only with the headquarters of the Mission Crusade; whereupon the Rector could do no more than point to the real purpose of the Crusade. When he had been acquainted with the purpose of the Seminary Crusade unit, the General Secretary of the Extension answered, on December 19, that his

erstwhile misgivings had vanished, and he added: "Let me, therefore, extend to St. Meinrad's Unit, every word of encouragement to increase and keep St. Meinrad's Seminary to the fore in this splendid Movement." It merely took time and patience to bring out the fact that the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade is not a competitor but an intellectual, spiritual, and financial contributor to the Catholic Mission activity in the United States.

To complete the picture of those difficulties: the measures that the Rector had found necessary to insure the continuance of the Seminary Unit became for some overzealous members the occasion for a false rumor that the Rector was opposed to the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade.

When those difficulties were at their height, the Rector consulted Father Luke Gruwe, at that time the Prior, a very spiritual man. He listened to the whole story and then said calmly: "So, that is a good sign. The devil is displeased with this movement. That is a sign that it is pleasing to God."

Chastened and cautioned by its mistake, the St. Meinrad Major Seminary Mission Crusade Unit nevertheless did not relax its zeal; its files bear witness to the generous work done during the past thirty-six years by this unit—one of the founding units. But the full and perhaps most important results are to be sought in the pastoral activity of those who, imbued with the spirit of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, have gone forth from the seminary as priests.

The completion of the Major Seminary did not end the building activity of Abbot Athanasius. The frame building that had been erected as a monastery in 1856 was not worth further repairing; it was torn down in 1927, and a new frame building with a stone basement was built on the old foundation, except that on the north side the foundation was extended a little and, under Abbot Ignatius, the successor of Abbot Athanasius, one porch was added on the east side and another on the south. At first, the building was used again as living quarters for a few Brothers and some of the hired hands, and as a tailor shop. At present, it is called St. Placid Hall, and is used

to house young Oblates of high-school age, interested in ultimately becoming Benedictine Brothers.

Since the old slaughterhouse was not adequately equipped to supply the community and school, which were increasing in numbers from year to year, a new one was built in 1928. It is a well-equipped and sanitary establishment.



ST. PLACID HALL. OBLATE SCHOOL

Abbot Athanasius did much for the school by building the Major Seminary and planning a large expansion of the Minor Seminary. But he was not a school man. He did not want a big school, fearing that the bigger the school, the greater the financial sacrifice for the Abbey and the greater the difficulty in preserving monastic observance. Always fearful, too, of the possibility that worldliness would creep into the monastery, he would not accede for many years to the suggestion of sending men to universities—least of all to secular

universities—to enable them to obtain academic degrees and eventually to have the high school and the college departments accredited. He did, however, send several men to Sant' Anselmo, Rome, for studies in philosophy and theology, and to Einsiedeln, to take courses in natural sciences; and in 1918 he sent the appointed editor of the prospective *Grail* to Notre Dame to attend a summer course in journalism. Beginning with 1923 he sent, not without some misgivings, several Fathers to Notre Dame University, Indiana, to attend summer courses. In 1931, the Jasper Academy was accredited with the North Central Association of Secondary Schools.

Nor could Abbot Athanasius be classed as a book man. Expenditures for new acquisitions to the library were held to a very conservative level.

In spite of what might be called monastic frugality, Abbot Athanasius showed generosity when that was called for by charity. When fire had destroyed St. Joseph's Abbey, Louisiana, on November 20, 1907, St. Meinrad's Abbey quickly donated \$1,500 for its reconstruction. On September 20, 1926, Mount Angel, Oregon, also suffered a destructive fire, and St. Meinrad gave \$1,000 as an alms. After the first World War, the Abbot Primate repeatedly wrote to Abbot Athanasius to thank him for considerable amounts of money that he had sent to Rome to be used both for Sant' Anselmo and for other impoverished monasteries in Europe.

From October 14 to October 18, 1920, Abbot Athanasius, as first Assistant to the President of the Congregation, conducted the canonical Visitation at Conception, the Abbey of the President. He then attended the General Chapter, which was held there from October 19 to October 22. Abbot Frowin was feeble from old age and ill, and so Abbot Athanasius presided.

In one of the sessions Abbot Paul Schaeuble, of St. Joseph's Abbey, proposed an amalgamation of the American-Swiss Congregation with the American-Cassinese. In that proposal he had the support of the major part of his own capitulars. The underlying motive of his action is to be sought in the hard struggle in which his Abbey found itself from its very beginning. However, the other

Abbots attending the General Chapter did not only not favor such an amalgamation, they even stressed the advisability of adhering to the Swiss traditions and spirit.

Another important matter discussed at the General Chapter was the question of revising the *Constitutions and Declarations on the Holy Rule* in conformity with the new requirements of the *Code of Canon Law* (1917). Abbot Athanasius was commissioned to take care of the matter and to put the revised version into a form ready to be submitted to the Holy See.²⁰

It was a big task, especially for one who was not a canonist. Abbot Athanasius worked at the revision for a long time. He had to make several drafts of the work before it was judged satisfactory. In the revision, the *Constitutiones* were happily separated from the *Declarationes*, as suggested by the Abbot Primate, giving the whole work more order and clarity; hence the title, *Declarationes in Sacram Regulam et Constitutiones*. The text ultimately submitted to the Holy See was approved on September 9, 1924.

In the last session of the 1920 General Chapter, Abbot Athanasius was again elected First Assistant and Vice-President to the President of the Congregation. At the next General Chapter, October 14-15, 1922, he was elected President.

The exhausting work of revising the constitutions, together with his additional responsibility as President of the Congregation, greatly undermined the health of Abbot Athanasius. He had been suffering severely from bronchitis, and he was also afflicted with heart and kidney trouble.

He had hardly become President of the Congregation when a catastrophe befell one of its abbeys.

Father Vincent Wehrle, O.S.B., had finally succeeded in obtaining Bishop Shanley's permission to make a monastic foundation near Devils Lake, and the Holy See granted the erection of a monastery, St. Gall, with a novitiate, in 1894. The Fathers from St. Meinrad, some of whom were working on the Indian mission and others

²⁰ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives. File, *General Chapters, Acta et Decreta*.

were giving temporary help to the new monastery, were not favorably inclined toward the new foundation; they saw no future for it. As a matter of fact, in 1899 Father Vincent moved his little community to Richardton, North Dakota, where he established it as St. Mary's Monastery, with himself as Prior. He began building in that same year. By 1908 most of the monastic buildings, including a beautiful romanesque church and a school, were completed. The Priory was admitted into the Swiss-American Congregation in the fifth General Chapter, in October, 1902. In 1903, Prior Vincent became the first Abbot of what was now called Assumption Abbey. In 1910, he was appointed Bishop of Bismarck; but he retained the office of Abbot until July 6, 1915. On the very next day, the community elected one of its members to succeed him. Bishop Wehrle resigned from his episcopal see in 1939. He died in 1941.

From the very start, the second Abbot felt sure—too sure—of himself, though he had a big and unenviable task on his hands. According to his statements, his predecessor had left him a debt of \$330,000, to which interest of 8%, 10% and 12% was attached. Since the meager sources of income had to be devoted mainly to defray the running expenses, additional loans of \$30,000 had to be made annually to pay the interest. After seven years he had succeeded in reducing the burden by means of loans involving only 4-6% interest.²¹

Upon his very urgent and entreating appeal to Abbot Athanasius, on October 20, 1919, for an immediate loan of \$20,000, the latter, prompted rather by his charity toward an associate Abbey in need than by his wonted prudence, loaned him—"just for six months," so the appeal read—\$10,000, and was instrumental, through a third party, in having a layman loan the other \$10,000 to the same borrower. The Abbot of Richardton seems to have been quick to make this acquisition of capital known for the furtherance of his own purpose, for, on December 14, Father Ambrose Mattingly, O.S.B.,

²¹ These and the subsequent statements about the affair rest on the authority of the correspondence preserved in St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Richardton*.

wrote to Abbot Athanasius: "... Whether there is any truth in this rumor [the above-mentioned loans] or not I am unable to say; but as a member of the St. Meinrad community and in the light of such observations as I have been able to make, I feel in duty bound to counsel the utmost caution in becoming entangled in any way in Richardton affairs."

The fears of Father Ambrose were well grounded. Instead of managing well with the loans entrusted to him, the Abbot at Richardton had grandiose plans drawn up for a new monastery together with a university at Mandan, 75 miles east of Richardton. His plans would have involved an outlay of several million dollars. But he felt sure of himself, for did he not have shares in prospective oil wells and similar projects? Together with the Prior and another member of the Abbey, the Abbot of Richardton had even formed a corporation apart from the monastery, under the legal corporate title "Mandan Corporation," to borrow money for investments without the knowledge and consent of the Chapter; there were even corporations sole for other projects.

Both Bishop Wehrle and, unofficially, Abbot Athanasius, had informed the Abbot Primate about the situation at Richardton. This appears from the fact that in letters dated January 4 and March 18, 1922, to Abbot Athanasius, the Primate spoke of the great services the latter had rendered the Congregation and suggested that Abbot Athanasius hold a special Visitation at Richardton. The suggestion was a delicate one, inasmuch as Abbot Frowin, though ever so feeble, was still the President of the Congregation and, unless an apostolic mandate were forthcoming, the approved Constitutions of the Congregation did not empower anybody, except the President of the Congregation, or someone delegated by him, to conduct a Visitation in another monastery, still less to conduct an extraordinary Visitation. It is also to be kept in mind that according to the Constitutions neither any individual monastery nor the Congregation as such, barring some special commitment, could be held responsible for the financial affairs of another monastery of the Congregation; each monastery was a legal person, responsible only to the Holy See. On

the occasion of the General Chapter held on June 14-15, 1922, the Abbots privately did inquire of the Abbot of the Richardton Abbey about his rumored financial difficulties, but the Chapter could not do that officially; the matter would lie within the province of the President of the Congregation, and the affair was to be handled during the Visitation.

As soon as Abbot Athanasius had been elected President, he officially conferred with the Abbot of Richardton about an extraordinary Visitation during that very summer or autumn; but the latter, perhaps wishing to avoid the unwelcome impression of an extraordinary Visitation, requested that it be put off until the spring of 1923, the year of the regular triennial Visitation; he would then have everything in order for it.

On October 26, 1922, Abbot Athanasius received a letter from the Apostolic Delegate asking for a report about the situation in the Richardton Abbey and about the measures that had been, or ought to be, adopted to remedy it. The Apostolic Delegate enclosed an excerpt of a lengthy letter from several Fathers of the Richardton Abbey requesting intervention. Abbot Athanasius answered the Apostolic Delegate on November 4. He informed him of what he knew from unofficial sources, and of the official Visitation to be held the following spring, for which he had made preparations. Since Abbot Athanasius was then under medical treatment for asthma and for heart and kidney trouble, it would be a great hazard for him, he pointed out, to go into a severe North Dakota winter for the purpose of conducting the visitation at once. He also stated that from the time he had become President of the Congregation he had had no complaints, either singly or collectively, from the Richardton monastery. He could not say what measures the former Visitor, Abbot Frowin, had taken, because a Visitor was not to communicate his findings to such as were not concerned.

A month later, on December 23, Abbot Athanasius had to consult a specialist about his illness. Following the consultation, he was hospitalized from December 28, 1922, to August 23, 1923.

Realizing that the precarious state of his health would not permit

him to conduct the scheduled Visitation properly, nor to comply with his other duties as President, Abbot Athanasius resigned from the presidency of the Congregation in March, 1923, while he was still at the hospital. Thereupon the other Abbots met for a quasi-general chapter at Conception, April 22-23, and they elected Abbot Philip Ruggle, of Conception, as President.

On September 24, 1924, the Abbots of the congregation assembled in Chicago to discuss the Richardton affair, but the poor state of health of Abbot Athanasius made it advisable for him not to attend; he sent one of his monks, Father Columban Thuis, O.S.B., as his delegate. The assembly had been called at the direction of the Apostolic Delegate; it was he who also presided.

In view of the fact that, on the one hand, the Abbey at Richardton was insolvent and that, on the other hand, the Congregation as such was not legally responsible for the indebtedness—nor could it have taken it over in charity without grave danger to itself—there was but one thing to be done: the Abbey had to declare itself legally bankrupt. One of its members was temporarily appointed Apostolic Administrator, and Abbot Alcuin Deutsch, of St. John's Abbey, volunteered to take over the whole situation provided he would be given a completely free hand.

On April 27, 1926, the Sacred Congregation for Religious established a tribunal consisting of Bishop Bernard J. Mahoney of Sioux Falls, Abbot Paul Schaeuble of St. Joseph's Abbey, Louisiana, and Abbot Michael Ott of St. Martin's Abbey, Lacey, Washington, to examine the whole case and to affix the responsibility.

First, on December 20, 1926, this tribunal decreed that during the trial the two indicted, namely the Abbot and the Prior of Richardton, must stay at St. Meinrad's Abbey. Apprised of that decree, Abbot Athanasius was indignant. He immediately, on December 22, wrote to Bishop Chartrand, an alumnus and always a loyal friend of St. Meinrad: "The incredible has happened." He went on to say that he resented the statement in the document that the order had been decreed in accordance with the wish (*votum*) of himself; he had received no official inquiry about his wishes in the matter. In view

of the fact that it was generally known that the Abbot from Richardton had taken up a number of loans in the neighborhood of St. Meinrad Abbey and throughout the Diocese and in many other Dioceses that had ecclesiastical students at St. Meinrad, the prolonged stay of the two under indictment would make a bad impression upon the hundreds of students and would bring to St. Meinrad's Abbey importunate visits from many distressed creditors of Richardton Abbey.

On the same day, Abbot Athanasius telegraphed and wrote along the same lines to Bishop Mahoney. But in his reply of December 29, the Bishop was reluctant to revoke that point of the decree.

Bishop Chartrand, on his part, quite agreed with Abbot Athanasius. Without mentioning the Abbot's name, he wrote at once to the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, making the affair his own pastoral concern. He wrote very discreetly; he did not even indicate that the Abbot had communicated with him.

On December 29 the Apostolic Delegate, under the impression that Abbot Athanasius had invited the two under indictment to stay at St. Meinrad, wrote to both Abbot Athanasius and to Bishop Chartrand. To the Abbot he wrote:

... Bishop Chartrand holds that the presence of the two religious would not be conducive to the edification and good morale of the people of his Diocese and especially of the students of the seminary at St. Meinrad's. He therefore expresses the hope that they will not be sent to St. Meinrad's, where, as he says, their presence would be a constant occasion of talk, and in the vicinity of which many of their creditors reside. ... Though I have not received any information within the last year in regard to St. Mary's [the Abbey in Richardton], I would ask you to give due and careful consideration to the arguments advanced by Bishop Chartrand, for I presume that your consent is necessary before the two religious in question would be permitted to take up their residence in the Abbey of St. Meinrad.

To the Bishop he wrote:

... I understand that the Abbot Primate is here and I suppose he brings with him instructions from Rome in regard to the matter. I am sure that your observations, together

with those of other Bishops having students at the seminary at St. Meinrad's, should furnish the Father Abbot of St. Meinrad's with good reason for refusing to permit the former Abbot and former Prior [of Richardton Abbey] to take up their residence there. I have in the meantime written to Right Reverend Abbot Schmitt requesting him to give due and careful consideration to your statement. . . .

One can see a smile on the face of both Bishop Chartrand and Abbot Athanasius. The Bishop, writing to the Abbot on January 3, 1927, and enclosing the Apostolic Delegate's letter, added: "I feel sure that these two persons will not come to St. Meinrad. If I can be of more assistance to you, please let me know."

The Abbot Primate, too, endeavored to bring about the annulment of that point of the decree.

Eventually, Abbot Philip Ruggle, of Conception, on February 10 received a request from the tribunal to receive the two under indictment; he complied with the request, all the more because from the very start he had expressed his readiness to do just that.

According to the opinion of the *promotor iustitiae* of the trial, it was the thorough testimony of Abbot Athanasius that clearly established the proof that the Congregation could not be held responsible for the catastrophe that had befallen the Richardton Abbey; and so the responsibility was placed where, in the opinion of the tribunal, it belonged. Furthermore, because the principal defendant had not complied with the summons to appear before the tribunal, he incurred the proper ecclesiastical censure.

With that settled, the next question concerned what was to be done with the rest of the community and its holdings. Upon the request of the Holy See, Abbot Alcuin Deutsch, of St. John's Abbey, took over with full power in both spiritual and temporal matters. St. John's Abbey was situated closest to Richardton and was a member of the numerically and financially stronger American-Casinese Congregation. On September 1, 1928, St. John's acquired by purchase the two sections of land on which the Richardton Abbey was built. Abbot Alcuin, appointed Apostolic Administrator in 1926, reinforced the remainder of the small community at Richardton with

four capable Fathers from St. John's and appointed as Prior one of the four men, Father Cuthbert Goeb, O.S.B., an excellent choice. In 1931, Father Cuthbert was made Abbot of the now resuscitated Abbey. And so the Richardton Abbey could now confidently look to a new future.

Abbot Athanasius complied with an official invitation of the Abbot Primate to attend a general meeting of all the Abbots of the order, in Rome, from October 1 to October 15, 1925. The Abbots were to elect a new Abbot Primate and to deliberate on some weighty matters concerning the Order. Abbot Athanasius left St. Meinrad on July 3, 1925. After spending some time in Rome and in other places in Italy, he arranged for a longer stay in Germany, for a while in Bad Kissingen, in the hope of improving his health. He was back at St. Meinrad on December 24.

The year 1928 marked the completion of an undertaking in the section of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis that is now the Diocese of Evansville; it was the foundation of St. Benedict parish in Evansville. But the beginning of the foundation of this parish dates back to 1911.²²

In November, 1911, Coadjutor Bishop Chartrand, with the intention of honoring his Alma Mater, asked Abbot Athanasius to supply the faculty for a Catholic High School to be built in Indianapolis. Abbot Athanasius regretted that he could not accept the offer; at that time he did not have a sufficient number of qualified teachers for the project. As an alternative, Father Basil Heusler, O.S.B., who was present at the conversation, suggested the founding of a parish on the east side of Evansville by the Benedictine Fathers of St. Meinrad. The Fathers would also be Chaplains to the Poor Clares, on Kentucky Avenue, and to the Little Sisters of the Poor, on Newburg Pike Road and Broadway—now Lincoln and Harlan Avenues. A new parish was greatly needed, especially for the farmers living out in that direction. Besides, it was very inconvenient for the as-

²² This account of the beginning of St. Benedict's parish is based on the correspondence, documents, and other material kept in St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Evansville, St. Benedict*.

sistants at Assumption Church and at St. Mary's to be Chaplains to the Poor Clares and to the Little Sisters. Father Dickmann, the pastor of St. Mary's, had for some time past suggested the formation of a new parish in that vicinity.

After obtaining the consent of the Consultors on December 13, 1911, Bishop Chartrand formally entrusted the care of the new parish to St. Meinrad's Abbey and gave Abbot Athanasius discretionary powers with regard to the selection and purchase of property. Naturally, the Abbot acted through a real estate agent; it was not to become known that the property was wanted for a church. Several sites were under consideration and Bishop Chartrand, on March 26, 1912, urged the Abbot to proceed with the purchase of the property on Lincoln and between Kerth and Fares Avenues; only one small item that would easily be cleared still delayed the transaction. But the Little Sisters of the Poor had special interests in their Home for the Aged, where the services of a priest were often needed on short notice; they engaged a real estate agent of their own: they secretly buried a blessed medal of St. Benedict in a different piece of property, a large vacant lot 204 by 1,012 feet, from which only Broadway (Harlan) along the eastern line of their property separated them. That was the property that Abbot Athanasius eventually purchased, on August 15, 1912, for \$12,000; it cost \$5,000 less than the slightly smaller property for which he had first negotiated. St. Meinrad's Abbey advanced the price of the purchase; the parish was later to repay the sum.

On September 4, 1912, Father Martin Hoppenjans, O.S.B., was appointed the first pastor of St. Benedict's parish. He arrived there on November 6. Father Martin was an especially zealous monk and priest. After minor difficulties over where the new church ought to be located had been settled, the people always worked faithfully with him and with his successors and assistants.

On November 7, 1912, the Bishop set the limits of the new parish as follows: "All East of McCormick Avenue,"²³ (as far as Warrick

²³The name of this avenue has in more recent times been changed to Morton Avenue.

County line), South of Division Street and North of the Ohio River.”

The *beneplicium apostolicum*, for which Bishop Chartrand had applied, was granted on April 29, 1913.

Arrangements were made for Father Martin to take up his abode temporarily in the guesthouse of the St. Clare Monastery, on Kentucky Avenue. He began his pastoral work by making a house-to-house visit of the territory assigned to him. According to his records, there were then about 125 Catholic families.

The first services of the new parish were held in the outside chapel of the St. Clare Monastery on the first Sunday in Advent, December 1, 1912.

Until the appointment in December of the first Assistant, Father Aloysius Fischer, O.S.B., a Father came from St. Meinrad for every Sunday and Holy Day to help Father Martin. In March, 1913, since Father Aloysius had been assigned to other duties, Father Othmar Schneeberger, O.S.B., was appointed First Assistant; in June, 1914, Father Vincent Wagner, O.S.B., came as Second Assistant. Father Vincent was also to be Chaplain at the institution of the Little Sisters of the poor, and Father Othmar was Chaplain for the monastery of the Poor Clares.

With the coming of Father Aloysius, Father Martin had for the time being accepted the hospitality that Henry Adler, a prominent member of the parish, generously offered. When, in June, 1914, the Benedictine Sisters' house was finished—the Sisters had it built at their own expense (\$7,371), though it was on the parish grounds—the Fathers first occupied it until 1921, when the present Rectory was ready for occupancy. (The large addition to the Sisters' house was put up later and at the expense of the parish.) St. Meinrad's Abbey contributed \$5,000 toward the building of the Rectory so that the Fathers from the Abbey, passing through Evansville when going to or returning from some mission, could stop there without being considered as imposing a burden upon the parish.

From the very beginning, Father Martin was intent upon providing for the education of the children of the parish. For this purpose he secured the efficient help of the Ferdinand Sisters of St. Benedict.

These Sisters gladly shared the inconveniences and hardships of the young parish. The school numbered about 130 children. It opened in September, 1913. Sister Benedicta taught grades 7 and 8 in Michael Kelly's house, on Kentucky Avenue, between Cherry and Walnut streets. Kelly's house also served as a temporary residence for the teaching Sisters and their housekeeper, Sister Elizabeth. Sisters Hyacinth and Anastasia taught the other grades in the basement of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

At the coming of the Sisters, Father Martin had already begun work on a large combined school and church building. The cornerstone of the new building was laid on August 31, 1913. When the building was ready for occupancy, on March 17 of the following year, the Sisters took temporary residence in it. On March 19 all the children moved into their own school, and, on March 21, the feast of St. Benedict, Abbot Athanasius dedicated the building and the first solemn service was held in it.

In 1913, one of the Fathers received the permission of the Bishop to say Mass on the fourth Sunday of each month at Woodmere, the State Asylum. Woodmere was at that time within St. Benedict's parish limits.

The rapid growth of the new parish from about 125 families in 1913 to approximately 500 families in 1927 made necessary the building of a large church. This impressive church, in Lombard-Basilica style, was to seat 1,000 persons. It was begun on May 5, 1927; the cornerstone was laid by Abbot Athanasius on July 10, and it was solemnly dedicated by him on March 18, 1928. He had on the previous day consecrated the high altar.

During the spring of 1928 the community could not help noticing that the Abbot's health was gradually growing worse. He became reluctant to give directions, and when an official would consult him regarding some action of importance the Abbot seemed to be afraid to commit himself. He himself began to realize his condition and he provided against it. Father Luke, his faithful Prior since 1908, was now in his eighty-first year, and the Abbot judged that under the existing circumstances a younger and very capable man should take

over that office. On June 20, 1929, he entrusted the office of Prior to Father Columban Thuis, O.S.B.; Father Columban had for a number of years been a great aid to him in the material administration of the Abbey.

On October 20, his seventieth birthday, after two or three months of hospital care, Abbot Athanasius petitioned the Holy Father to allow the Chapter of the Abbey to elect a Coadjutor Abbot, who would have the right of succession. The petition was granted on January 18, 1930.²⁴

The Abbot Primate, Fidelis von Stotzingen, who at the request of Abbot Athanasius had presented the petition to the Holy Father, had written on December 14: "You know, dearest Father Abbot, how exceedingly dear you are to me. Then, too, among all the monasteries that I have visited in America, my impressions that I have received at St. Meinrad have been the very best. That is really an ideal monastery, so quite in keeping with the spirit of our holy Father Benedict!" And Archabbot Raphael Walzer, of Beuron, when he had been informed of the decision of Abbot Athanasius, wrote to him on March 10, 1930: "Today, and from my whole heart, I should like to thank you for having always been to me a dear helper and friend, one of the few that one can find in this world."²⁵

His hope for a cure had waned, and Abbot Athanasius returned to St. Meinrad on May 21, 1930. Meanwhile the newly elected Coadjutor Abbot, Ignatius Esser, O.S.B., relieved him of all responsibilities, enabling him to keep his attention fixed steadily upon things eternal. But Abbot Athanasius never gave up interest and concern in monastic life about him.

From the latter part of April, 1932, he kept to his room. Each morning, at 4:30, Holy Communion was brought to him. On the morning of July 11 he had risen to prepare himself for Holy Communion but had fallen back upon the bed; there he was found in a comatose condition. Extreme Unction was administered.

²⁴ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, section 1, drawer 2, folder, *Athanasius Schmitt (III Abbas)*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

He did not regain consciousness and his right side became paralyzed. In the evening the community gathered about him and said the prayers for the dying. The next morning, July 12, it was apparent that he was at the point of death, and the community again assembled. He died while they were praying at his bedside.

The funeral was held on July 15. Bishops Joseph Chartrand, of Indianapolis, and John Floersh, of Louisville, four Abbots, and, in addition to the community, nearly a hundred priests and a large concourse of people and religious attended the funeral services. Bishop Chartrand, always an impressive speaker, depicted the glories of sanctifying grace that for time and eternity embellish the soul faithful to its vocation. The body of Abbot Athanasius was laid to rest in the Abbey cemetery.

Abbot Athanasius, a zealous monk and solicitous Abbot, left St. Meinrad's Abbey economically and spiritually in a flourishing condition. May the words that St. Benedict wrote in his *Rule* be found verified in Abbot Athanasius: "Let the Abbot observe this present Rule in all things; so that, having ministered well, he may hear from the Lord what that good servant heard who gave to his fellow servants their measure of wheat in due season: 'Amen I say to you, he will set him over all his goods.'"

CHAPTER XIV

ABBOT IGNATIUS ESSER, O.S.B., MARCH 11, 1930.
ST. MEINRAD ARCHABBEY, OCTOBER 25, 1953

THE CURRENT EVENTS of a Religious Institute must first mellow in the storehouse of history's memory before they can be fully evaluated. Meanwhile the historiographer must be satisfied with being merely the chronicler of the more outstanding achievements.

After the Sacred Congregation for Religious, empowered thereto by the Holy Father, had commissioned the Abbot Primate on January 18, 1930, to grant Abbot Athanasius' petition for a Coadjutor, the Holy Father on January 18, 1930, empowered the Chapter of St. Meinrad's Abbey to elect a Coadjutor Abbot who would have full administration in things both temporal and spiritual and who would have the right of succession.¹

The Abbot Primate forwarded the document to the Abbot President of the Congregation, who sent it to Abbot Athanasius, at that time in the Kneipp Sanitarium at Rome City, Indiana; Abbot Athanasius, in turn, ordered the Prior, Father Columban Thuis, O.S.B., to make arrangements for the election; he himself appointed the Special Secretary (Father Albert) for the election. The election was held in the Chapter Room on March 11, 1930, under the exact observ-

¹ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, section 1, drawer 2, folder, *Athanasius Schmitt (III Abbas)*.

ance of canonical requirements. Abbot Philip Ruggle, O.S.B., presided as President of the Congregation. Father Ignatius Esser, O.S.B., received the necessary majority on the third ballot, whereupon the Abbot President declared him duly elected. Father Ignatius accepted the trust only with reluctance, and the Abbot President then formally confirmed him as the Coadjutor Abbot. After that, all went to the church where amid the ringing of bells the community paid formal homage to him and solemnly chanted the *Te Deum*.²

Coadjutor Abbot Ignatius received the solemn abbatial blessing from Bishop Joseph Chartrand on May 7. Bishop John A. Floersh, of Louisville, in his sermon for the occasion, preached on the mission and work of St. Benedict and of his Order in the course of history and, speaking also of the present time, eulogized what had been done by St. Meinrad's Abbey for the education of a native diocesan clergy especially for the Dioceses of Indianapolis and of Louisville. Himself a lover of the liturgy and a benevolent patron of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, he paid this additional tribute: "Behold the love they have inspired, by their example, in the sacred liturgy and chant of the Church! Who can overlook their teeming printing press and their initiative in widening among student circles the love of our foreign missions?" Besides Abbots Philip Ruggle of Missouri, Paul Schaeuble of Louisiana, Bernard Murphy of Oregon, Martin Veth of Kansas, and Edward Burgert of Arkansas, there were present about 250 visiting priests, most of whom were alumni of St. Meinrad.³

The new prelate was born in Ridgway, Illinois, on April 18, 1890, the fifth of seven children born to Martin and Christina Esser. At baptism he received the name John Edward. When, in 1901, the family moved to Poseyville, Indiana, the young John Edward there finished his sixth grade parochial school work that he had begun in Ridgway, after which he attended the public grade and high school at Poseyville for three years (1902-1905). Following this, the boy worked for three years in a drugstore; the boxes and bottles and jars,

² *Ibid.*, section 1, drawer 1, folder, *Ignatius Esser (IV Abbas)*.

³ *The Grail*, Vol. XII, pp. 63-67 (The Solemn Abbatial Blessing).



ABBOT IGNATIUS ESSER, O.S.B., THE FOURTH ABBOT
MARCH 11, 1930; FIRST ARCHABBOT, OCTOBER 25, 1953

standing next to one another in well-ordered rows, could not fail to impress him who was by nature inclined to have things exactly ordered.

Meanwhile, serious thoughts began to occupy the mind of the young man, now eighteen years of age; the monastic life and priesthood were attracting him. In obedience to that impulse of divine grace he enrolled in the first class of St. Meinrad Minor Seminary on September 8, 1908. He acquitted himself excellently in his courses in the Minor Seminary. The young man applied for admission into the monastery and was invested as a Novice on September 8, 1913.

At his Simple Profession on September 8, 1914, John Edward Esser received the name Ignatius. He made his Solemn Vows on September 8, 1917. After the Minor and Major Orders had been received, he was ordained to the priesthood on June 10, 1919, at St. Meinrad.

From 1919 until the time of his election as Coadjutor Abbot, Father Ignatius taught various sciences both in the Minor and in the Major Seminary, mainly mathematics and philosophy. From August, 1929, until his election, he was Rector of the Minor Seminary.

Shortly after the election of Coadjutor Abbot Ignatius, the St. Meinrad Chapter had to furnish one of its monks for the abbatial office of another monastery. Abbot Paul Schaeuble, O.S.B., of St. Joseph's Abbey, Louisiana, had resigned, and the Chapter of that Abbey had, on October 29, 1931, elected as his successor one who was also Abbot Paul's choice, namely Father Columban Thuis, O.S.B., of St. Meinrad's Abbey, Rector of the Major Seminary since 1930. Abbot Philip Ruggle, O.S.B., who as President of the Congregation had presided over the election, hurried to St. Meinrad to obtain the consent of Father Columban's Abbot for him to accept the office; Coadjutor Abbot Ignatius, in turn, sought the counsel of the Chapter. The Chapter of St. Meinrad's Abbey regretted giving up Father Columban, yet it gave an affirmative consultive vote.

Father Anselm Schaaf, O.S.B., succeeded Abbot Columban as Rector of the Major Seminary till August 16, 1951.

A great task confronted the young Coadjutor Abbot Ignatius.⁴ The building program and a number of other improvements, planned for several years but delayed because of the poor health of Abbot Athanasius, had to be carried out; in addition, the educational work in the Minor and in the Major Seminary had to be brought up to meet the requirements of modern times; and, finally, in spite of this enlarged program of activity in the natural order of things, the monastic spiritual life, already well established at St. Meinrad, had to be safeguarded.

The first building project, a minor but vital one, was the construction of a dairy barn south of the garden land. The old, unsightly stable off the east front of the monastery was torn down. The cows were transferred to the new building in January, 1931. The word "stable" no longer befitted the new building; it was a modern dairy barn—"the Abbey Dell Dairy Barn"—clean, well-lighted, and with modern equipment. Apart from the "nursery," and "the kindergarten," and enclosures for two bulls, there are stanchions for fifty cows.

The next project to be taken into consideration was the old chicken yard with its many unsightly sheds just south of the road leading down to the Abbey cemetery; apart from the yard's unprepossessing appearance, the main building plan demanded its removal. In January, 1931, a long and neat poultry house was erected southeast of the vineyard. In December, 1939, a duplicate was built just west of it, on the other side of the road leading down to the slaughter house. In 1939 there was also built an apiary west of the second poultry house.

William Rice, in Louisville, Kentucky, owned a spacious and well equipped summer house—Camp Rice—which he used for excursionists and family guests. When failing health prevented him

⁴ The narrative of the following events, except when otherwise stated, is based on the "Minutes of the Chapter meetings, St. Meinrad's Abbey"; on the "Contact Letters," which Abbot Ignatius has published periodically since August 26, 1933; and on various records and documents kept in the archives and in the various departments of the institution.



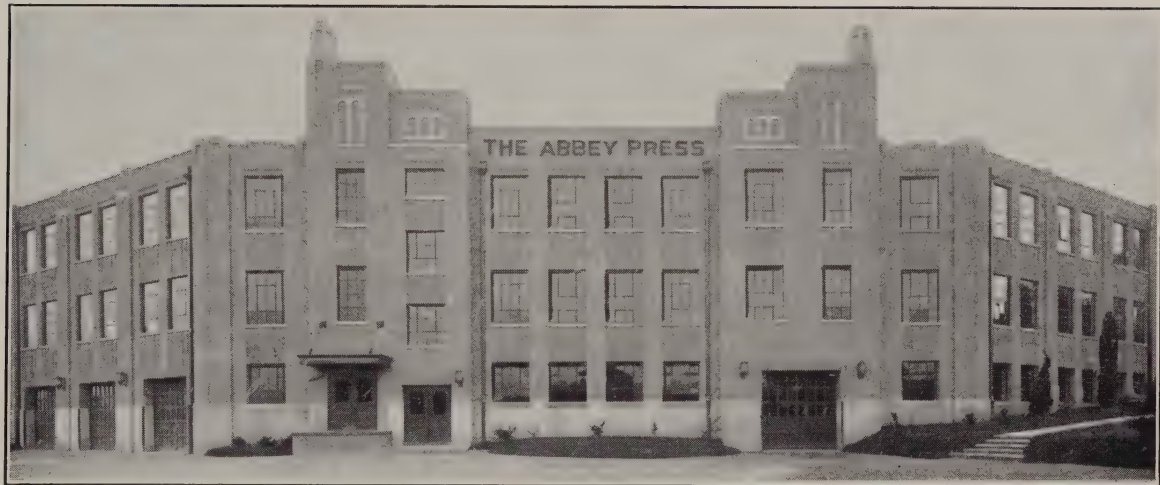
MAIN VIEW OF THE ABBEY DELL DAIRY BARN, 1931

from managing the camp, he desired to sell it to the Abbey, lest the camp fall into wrong hands. In May, 1932, the Abbey bought Camp Rice for \$2,500; it was promptly called Camp Benedict. The camp is halfway between St. Meinrad and Louisville; it lies several hundred feet to the east of highway 62. With its large and conveniently equipped bungalow on the right bank of Blue River, in ruggedly scenic country, it affords each one of the community an opportunity during summer of spending a week of relaxation in that solitude. A separate, small building, which William Rice had built to be the playhouse of his little granddaughter, was modified into a small chapel, St. William's Chapel; Bishop Joseph E. Ritter on April 30, 1934, granted this chapel the privilege of being a semipublic oratory.

In view of the fact that the old *Annex*, which ran parallel to the southern section of the main building at St. Meinrad, and which, besides serving several other purposes, housed the Abbey Press, would have to give way to the contemplated new Minor Seminary, a new Abbey Press building was constructed near the town. The contract was let in mid-October, 1930. It is a large, two-story building of cream-colored brick and limestone trimmings.

The main and most pressing project, however, was the new Minor Seminary. During the last year that Abbot Athanasius had been Rector of the Major Seminary there was an enrollment of 99 students: 31 in the Major—the Fraters not included—and 68 in the Minor Seminary. During the 1929-1930 scholastic year there was an enrollment of 380: 103 in the Major and 277 in the Minor Seminary. Coadjutor Abbot Ignatius had been Rector of the Minor Seminary in that year, and he keenly realized the need of a larger building. He began at once to expand and improve the former facilities by putting up a large, up-to-date building—even larger than the one Abbot Athanasius had in mind. As a consequence, the financing of that undertaking became an arduous task, all the more so by reason of the great financial depression from which the country was just emerging.

The Coadjutor Abbot engaged Crowe and Schulte, of Cincinnati, as architects. Besides furnishing the material and equipment for the



THE ABBEY PRESS, 1931

construction of this building, the Abbey engaged the experienced head of a construction company to direct the whole job; the Abbey also hired all the labor. Of course, the Abbey carpenter and blacksmith shops and other local facilities were at the disposal of the director.

With the huge task completed of excavating to a depth of fully fifteen feet, the work of construction was begun on May 18, 1931. On September 26, 1932, the building was ready for occupation; the opening of school had been postponed for two weeks, to make that possible. At the same time the old Minor Seminary section was thoroughly remodeled to afford such facilities as an infirmary for the Minor Seminary, a large lecture room for the Major Seminary, and, on the third and fourth floors, additional living quarters for the seminarians. Abbot Athanasius did not live to see the completion of this building; he had died on July 12, 1932.

It was a great relief for both the faculty and the students to occupy the new Minor Seminary with its spacious, well-lighted and well-ventilated halls and classrooms and with its various conveniences. But the most necessary and most gratifying improvement was the modern kitchen, together with its various refrigeration and storage rooms and the conveniently arranged refectories. The former chapel of the Minor Seminary now again became what it had been before the fire—a dining room for the Major Seminary. Only those Rectors and seminarians who for years had had to endure the situation of two overcrowded shifts in the old refectory in the basement of the former Major Seminary could fully appreciate the vast contrast.

On September 27, Abbot Ignatius consecrated the altar in the chapel of the new Minor Seminary, a gift of Christina Reitz, of Evansville, Indiana, and celebrated on this altar the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Following the Mass, Abbot Ignatius blessed the entire building, which had been erected at a cost of \$530,823.76.

In 1940, a new potato cellar was built into the slope east of the vineyard; another cellar, built some twelve years previously, had proved to be deficient in several respects.

Fortunately, the former fruit and vegetable cellar, built of concrete into the bank rising above a road that passes near the east



THE NEW MINOR SEMINARY, 1932
Major Seminary to the Left

front of the monastery, could be converted into a garage. New highways made the need for an adequate number of automobiles more imperative, and so a large addition was later built to the north end of this garage.

The large number of priest-monks at St. Meinrad made necessary a large group of altars for the celebration of Mass. Abbot Ignatius announced on January 30, 1941, that the former vaulted wine



THE KITCHEN

cellar—for some years used as a potato cellar—was to be changed into a chapel, the “Apostles’ Chapel.” In preparation for the installation of the altars, the whole vault and the walls were thoroughly cleaned by sandblasting; the floor was covered with sandstone slabs. There are twelve altars, each named after one of the Apostles; a thirteenth altar, a beautiful ceramic work, stands free against the north wall. It is called the “Queen of Apostles” altar. The whole wall behind it is covered by a painting of the Madonna and Child, done in Byzantine style. Originally this chapel was one large church-

ly-looking hall; but in more recent years its two long sides, along which the twelve altars of the Apostles were placed, were divided into twelve cubicles.

The monastic cemetery was enlarged and surrounded by a stone wall in 1946. Iron crosses that had marked the graves were replaced by small, compact, stone crosses.

In autumn of 1945, excavations were made just south of the Abbey Press for what was at first intended to be a storage building, made of sandstone, to house building equipment and material. On the ground floor were to be a garage and a blacksmith shop. The Brothers did the masonry work on the building. In the course of its construction this building was made more extensive than was originally intended: in addition to the storage rooms, garage, and blacksmith shop, it was made to house a large and well-equipped tailor shop, a shoe shop, and an art and ceramic shop. An elaborate machine shop was installed on the ground floor.

On August 9, 1945, the Chapter resolved to erect a Science Hall. This building was to contain much needed additional classrooms (especially for natural sciences), music rooms, and a small auditorium. To meet the subsequent specifications of a building committee, especially for a large stage and auditorium, the architect, Edward J. Schulte, eventually had to make plans for a building that was to serve more and bigger purposes than had at first been intended. Known at first simply as the Science Hall, then as St. Joseph Hall, it was finally called St. Bede's Hall.

The cornerstone of this building was blessed and laid by Abbot Ignatius on the feast of Christ the King, October 31, 1948.

Work on the building was done under the supervision of a Father of the Abbey. Craftsmen from the neighborhood were hired, and the Brothers did masonry work and shop work. Down in the valley one of the Fathers, with several students as helpers, fabricated a quantity of cement blocks—though only a minor quantity of what was needed—which the students carried up the hill to the building. At the concrete pouring, Fathers and Fraters worked side by side



MADONNA AND CHILD, APOSTLES CHAPEL

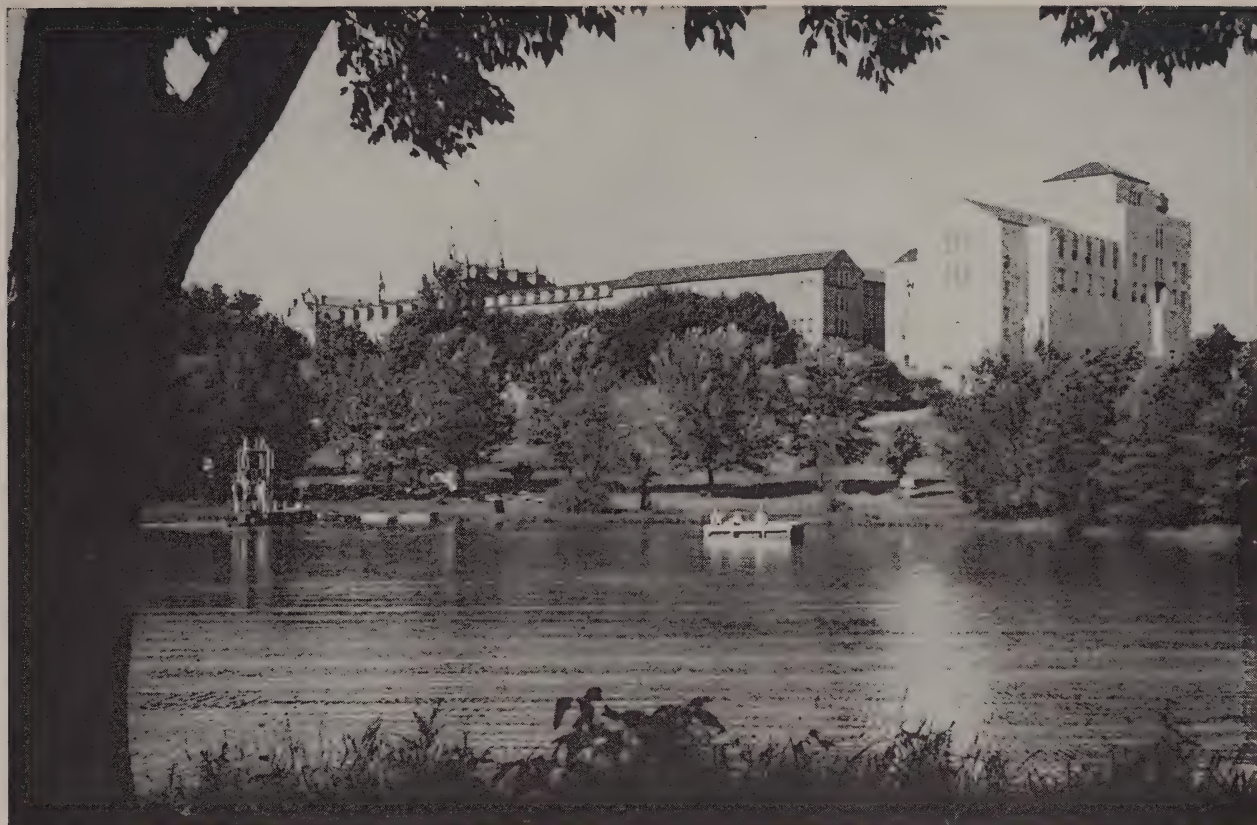
with hired workers. During the summer vacation, Fathers and Fraters helped regularly at fastening the metal laths and at other work.

With the exception of the auditorium, the building was ready for occupation at the opening of the fall term in 1952. The natural science class rooms in this building are generously provided with up-to-date equipment, even with an amateur radio station and a 10-inch reflecting telescope.

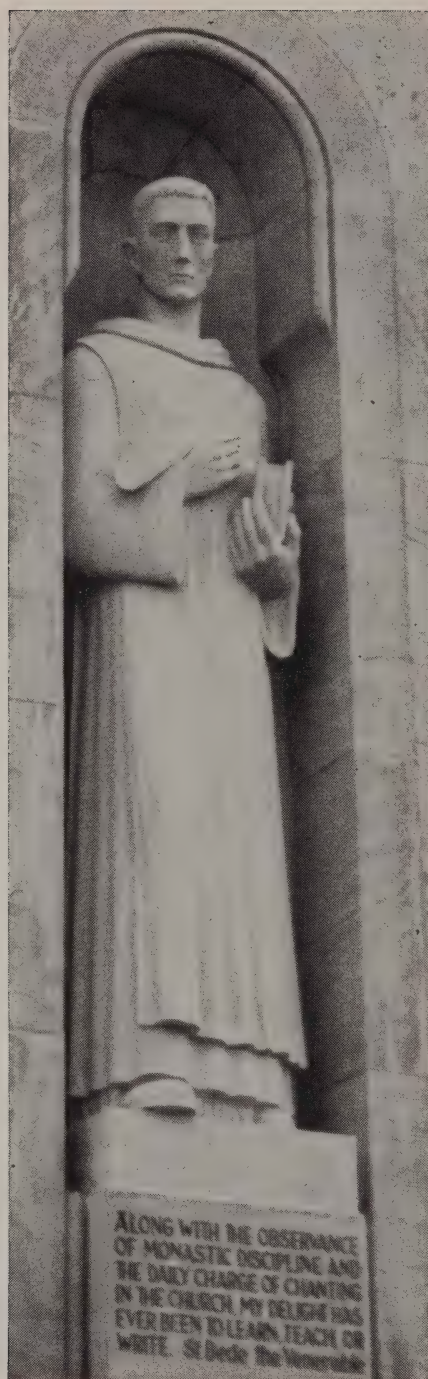
Art, too, has contributed its share to the exterior of this building. Herbert Jogerst, a first-class sculptor from Germany, who holds a state diploma for sculpture from the Municipal School of Decorative Arts in Strasbourg, together with the honor prize of that city, carved out of limestone a splendid statue of St. Bede. Done in the classic style and in heroic size, it is made to fit into the somewhat elongated niche that the architect had designed. Into the pedestal of the statue are chiseled the words with which St. Bede concluded the colophon to his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*: "Along with the observance of monastic discipline and the daily charge of chanting in the church, my delight has ever been to learn, teach, or write." On the bracket supporting the niche, the emblems of St. Joseph had already been chiseled, a reminder of the development of this building.

On the same wall that contains the niche of St. Bede, three arched sandstone panels surmount the triple windows of the top story. In the center panel Jogerst chiseled a figure of St. Benedict as the venerable patriarch and lawgiver of the monks. He holds before him the Holy Rule. Below the figure are two words from the Rule: *Ecce Lex* (Behold the Law). The panel to the right shows the figure of a cowled monk at prayer and, below it, the legend: *Ora* (Pray); in the left panel is the figure of another monk, in work clothes, trimming a stone for building—the church towers of St. Meinrad are indicated in the background—and, below the figure, the legend: *Labora* (Work).

The motif of St. Bede's Hall as a science hall is expressed in two panels high over the entrance. The left panel portrays the figure of a monk holding aloft a cross—the symbol of faith; above the monk



ST. MEINRAD ARCHABBEY; ST. BEDE HALL TO EXTREME RIGHT, 1953
Southwest View



ST. BEDE THE VENERABLE
In Niche of St. Bede Hall

hovers the figure of a dove—the symbol of the Holy Spirit; at the foot of the panel are incised in golden letters: *Fides* (Faith). In the other panel is the figure of a monk who holds on high a flaming torch—the natural light of reason; at the foot of this panel is incised the word *Intellectus* (Understanding).

The same artist has chiseled from Tennessee pink marble, which is very hard and durable, three figures for the three niches in the facade of the Abbey church. Each of these statues is a work of art in the best sense of the word. The one in the center niche represents a seated queenly figure of heroic size, the Madonna, with the Child Jesus seated on her lap; the Child holds in the palm of His left hand a globe surmounted by a cross; with His right hand He points to the Madonna, as though He would say: "Behold thy mother." The statue is an adaptation of the image that is on the first seal that Einsiedeln adopted, in 1232: that image is considered to be a replica of the older, perhaps even of the first, image of "Our Dear Lady of Einsiedeln"—the one that St. Meinrad himself venerated. Hence this statue may well be known as the St. Meinrad Madonna. The statue in the niche to the left is an image of St. Benedict, and the one in the right is that of St. Benedict's sister, St. Scholastica.

Another artist is here to be mentioned, namely Father Gregory de Wit, O.S.B., of Mont César Monastery, Louvain, Belgium. Abbot Ignatius met him on his second trip to Europe, in 1937, and invited him to come to St. Meinrad to do some painting.

In his paintings, Father Gregory combines artistic ability with theological insight. In the summer of 1938 he worked on the chapel of the Major Seminary. In February, 1939, he painted on wooden panels a unique way of the cross for the same chapel. He next painted a gigantic Christus in the apse of the Abbey Church. His most elaborate work done at St. Meinrad is the mural work in the Chapter Room of the monastery. The ceiling carries the grandiose theme of the *Benedicite*: "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord." The paintings on the walls are expressive of the monks, praising and blessing God by their life of prayer and work. Two rugged wooden statues of monks, carved by Brother Herman Zwerger, O.S.B. flank the door.



ST. BENEDICT; ST. MEINRAD MADONNA; ST. SCHOLASTICA
In Niches of Facade of Church

The windows were made in the studio of Emil Frei, St. Louis. They carry a design based on the Rule of St. Benedict and on monastic profession. Every detail in this hall is directed toward the wall of the far side, which shows Christ enthroned in heavenly glory and surrounded by faithful angels and monks.

The same Brother who carved the wooden statues for the Chapter Room also produced a large statue of St. Joseph and the Child Jesus. The statue, also of wood, stands in an open sandstone shrine erected at the foot of the so-called "Rocky Mountains," a mile east of the Abbey. On May 29, 1949, the shrine and statue were solemnly dedicated by Abbot Ignatius. A Pontifical Field Mass was celebrated on the occasion.⁵

Many improvements kept pace with the building activity; only the principal ones can be mentioned.

Some years after the completion of the new Major Seminary, Abbot Athanasius had, with a wide and well-graded gravel road, connected the west front of the church and the Major Seminary with highway 62, then under construction. When, in summer, 1930, a construction company paved the highway with concrete, Coadjutor Abbot Ignatius contracted with the company to concrete also that road. The other roads to and around the institution, which for about fifty years had been merely dirt roads, were eventually covered with gravel. In 1946 all these were surfaced with asphalt mixed with crushed limestone.

From 1890 on, the Abbey had its own direct-current electric light plant. For years that plant operated from only about five o'clock in the morning until nine in the evening. Coal-oil lamps and lanterns were used the rest of the time. With the beginning of choir service in the new church, electric light was also available for Matins at four o'clock in the morning and for the Conventual High Mass, though the coal oil lamps were kept available for an emergency.

When, on April 7, 1931, the high-tension line from Rockport, carrying an alternating current, reached St. Meinrad, the Abbey

⁵ *The Grail*, XXXI (1949), pp. 218-219.



CHAPTER ROOM
West Wall

Press with all its machinery at once began using the new current. The Abbey and the Major Seminary used the new line only from 1932 on; at the same time the outmoded, old wiring was changed to meet the requirements of the State laws. At that time the Abbey installed a new power unit generating an alternating current of 187.5 kilowatts at 2,400 volts. Since then the Abbey dynamo is put into service when most power is needed; at other times the shift is made to the more expensive current from outside. That insures a much-needed service day and night. Another power unit is now being installed that will generate an alternating current of 300 kilowatts at 2,400 volts. If desired, the unit can make the institution independent of any current from outside. The unit is to be housed in the space formerly occupied by the laundry. A new and attractive laundry building has been erected south of the power house.

The greater demands that were made on the boilers for running bigger dynamos and for heating more buildings necessitated the installation of boilers with a greater capacity. This, in turn, made necessary the remodelling of the power plant.

In 1934 the State Fire Inspectors drew up for the Abbey plans for better protection against fire. In accordance with the plans, a six-inch water-main was laid around the principal buildings. From that main, smaller pipes were made to branch off to other important buildings on the property. Various pieces of apparatus, such as hose, ladders, and so forth, were purchased; a fire company was appointed; and a pump that can project 1,000 gallons of water a minute was installed. Though the precautions taken entailed an outlay of about \$12,000, about \$800 annually were saved on payment of insurance.⁶

Up until 1930, the Abbey had for drinking water relied upon several wells round about the building. Cisterns, and especially the Anderson River (a large creek east of the Abbey), supplied other needs for water. But a more reliable and abundant source of water was imperative.

In 1937 the Abbey purchased from George Denning and his wife—and a few years later from other parties concerned—a large

⁶ *Contact Letter*, March 10, 1934.

tract of land to the northeast, situated in the valley and along the hill-sides east of St. Meinrad's "Rocky Mountains." The water reservoir of the Abbey was to be constructed in that valley, through which a little brook flowed. The W.P.A. agreed to build the dam for the purpose, as the agreement reads, "of checking soil erosion, conserving water, effecting flood control, and propagating and protecting fish and other aquatic life in said stream." "The beneficial results that shall inure to the grantors therefrom," the agreement continues, "are taken and considered . . . as a part of the consideration for the execution of this grant." In other words, for permitting the W.P.A. to trespass upon Abbey property in order to construct a lake for the public purpose of soil conservation and so forth, the Abbey was indemnified in part with the exclusive right to the supply of water.⁷ Work was begun on May 19, 1937. But the W.P.A. constructed only the dam; the Abbey furnished all the material, such as stone, cement, and so forth, for the construction of the outlet. Of course, the installation of the water main also devolved upon the Abbey. Moreover, as soon as the W.P.A. stopped work on this project, the Abbey ripped the dam and constructed a large settling basin at the head of the lake. As a result, the expense for the construction job alone was divided rather evenly between the Abbey and the W.P.A.

The first outlet did not hold up very long; the Abbey had to rebuild it almost completely. At that time the Abbey also made the dam and the outlet 18 inches higher, thus making possible the storage of a much greater quantity of water.

Abbot Ignatius also took special steps to safeguard the health of the community and of the students. With the opening of school in 1932 the Abbey had its resident physician and a dispensary. But since in general the condition of health in the community was such that a resident physician could not occupy himself

⁷ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, *Deeds*, Section 13 T. 4, R. 4; Section 18, T. 4, R. 3 W; folders, *Deeds*—Denning, Annie and George. Agreement between the Abbey and the W.P.A. in section, *Contracts*—Current, drawer 5; *Deeds*—Norbert Troesch; *Deeds*—Frank and Frances Bumm; St. Bryan, District Director, I.W.P.A. to Ignatius, May 5; May 12, 1937.

sufficiently, even though he had an office also in the town, arrangement was made with a neighboring physician to have office hours twice a week at the institution and to be ready for an emergency call at other times.

Simultaneously with the building activity at home, the Abbey carried on an expansion program beyond its walls.

St. Anne Parish at Belcourt, North Dakota, composed almost exclusively of Chippewa Indians of the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota,⁸ had been self-supporting so long as the Indians received the installment payments for land they had ceded to the Government, and so long as the farmers got a good price for their wheat, enabling them to pay Indian laborers a fair wage. But after these sources of revenue had given out, the pastor, a diocesan priest, told the Bishop that only a religious community would be able to handle the situation.

When Father Sylvester Eisenman, O.S.B., first came to Dakota, he became acquainted with the Chippewa Indians, who lived 90 miles north of his St. Michael Sioux Mission. Later, when at Marty, he annually used to make the cross-country round trip of 1,000 miles to bring many Chippewa children to his school at Marty, for there was no Catholic school in the Chippewa region. When, in 1932, he heard that the Chippewa Indians of the St. Anne parish badly needed priests, he solicitously recommended their cause to Abbot Ignatius. When Abbot Ignatius and Father Sylvester called upon the Bishop of Fargo, the Bishop offered to turn over to St. Meinrad's Abbey the whole parish of about 3,000 souls, together with the title to the property of some 42 acres upon which the church and rectory stood. Upon his return to St. Meinrad, Abbot Ignatius, on December 9, 1932, proposed the project to the capitulars. The Chapter voted in favor of accepting the new mission.

Father Sylvester had a man ready to take charge of the new

⁸ Minutes of Chapter meetings, December 9, 1932; St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, drawer 9, division St. Ann, Belcourt, N.D.; notes that the author has taken at St. Ann Mission; *The Grail*, XV, pp. 218- 223, 253, 318; XVI, p. 215.

mission. Ordained only a short time previously, Father Hildebrand Elliott, O.S.B., had, on July 10, 1931, been appointed Assistant to Father Sylvester at Marty. Father Sylvester introduced his young confrere into all the phases—spiritual and material—of mission life among the Indians: he took him along into their homes; he instructed him in their ways and introduced him into their confidence; he showed him all the workings of his "office"; he took him into his partnership when building was going on, revealing to him the intricacies of blueprints and contracts; when business conversations were to be held with business men, he requested him to attend; he even had him open and answer the business mail, while he himself merely glanced at the correspondence and signed it. Father Sylvester did all this with the purpose of forming Father Hildebrand into a man who eventually would be able to steer his own course as head of a large mission establishment. Father Sylvester foresaw what the situation at Belcourt would be and he was preparing for it.

In June, 1933, Abbot Ignatius ordered Father Hildebrand to take charge of the new mission. With Brother Vital Hammerer, O.S.B., he arrived at Belcourt on June 29. They found both the church and the rectory in great need of repair. Brother Vital, a good carpenter and joiner, had a big task before him. He first constructed two provisional bedrooms in the rear part of the large sacristy, one for Father Hildebrand and the other for himself. With the help of some Indians whom Father Hildebrand employed, the two built a log cabin for themselves. Finally, the old rectory had to be completely repaired. The house was raised to stand several feet higher, and a basement was dug and laid with concrete. The church was not worth repairing.

Father Hildebrand's most pressing concern were the religious training of the children and the need of a school. This, in turn, demanded Sisters. He was fortunate in obtaining four Benedictine Sisters from the convent at Ferdinand, Indiana, Sisters Flavia, Felicitas, Delphina, and Vita, together with a devoted lay missionary, Miss Cora Daunhauer. They arrived at Belcourt on August 25. He turned the remodeled spacious rectory over to them. Besides train-

ing a choir, taking care of the sacristy, and visiting the Indians in their homes, they at first had to content themselves with teaching religion to the children at the Government school three quarters of a mile distant. Since the law forbade the use of school time for the teaching of religion, the superintendent simply allowed the school to remain open for the required amount of time, and the children waited for the Sisters. "They wouldn't do that for us," remarked one of the Government teachers.

The spiritual harvest was very abundant; within less than three months, 98 persons received baptism; 10 marriages were blessed; and 75 children received their first Holy Communion.

In 1935, Father Hildebrand began to build a fireproof church and school combination as one unit. The church has seating capacity for 430 persons. For this unique and economic—especially heat-saving—building Father Sylvester furnished about 90% of the funds. The money had been given him in charity for mission work, and he simply turned it over to Father Hildebrand's mission because it needed funds to get started well. When, in the course of building, Father Hildebrand asked him to come up and advise him about some points concerning the building, Father Sylvester gave his opinion in a manner that left the younger man feel that he was absolutely free to make his own decisions; that is just what Father Sylvester wanted. Bishop Aloysius J. Muench dedicated the church and school on May 18, 1936.

Divine Providence gently paved the way to the next foundation made by St. Meinrad's Abbey. When the parishes of Aurora, Illinois, in the Rockford Diocese, were planning to build the Fox Valley Catholic Community High School for Boys, two of the pastors, the Reverend Fathers J. C. Simard and M. A. Schumacher, aware that St. Meinrad's Abbey had a high school at Jasper, Indiana, came to St. Meinrad to request that the Abbey take over the new school at Aurora. But at that time St. Meinrad could not spare enough men for another high school, and so the authorities at Aurora in 1925 engaged the Augustinian Fathers to conduct the new school. In the spring of 1933, Bishop Edward F. Hoban and the Reverend Simard

again requested that St. Meinrad take over the school at Aurora; along with the school the bishop offered the Abbey the care of a parish.

In view of the fact that the academy at Jasper no longer presented prospects that would justify a continuation of the many sacrifices St. Meinrad had made in its behalf, the Abbey Chapter on April 25, 1933, decided to transfer the faculty and the facilities of Jasper Academy to the Fox Valley Catholic Community High School for Boys; the Fox Valley school was henceforth to be known as Marmion. The name Marmion was a tribute to the illustrious Abbot Columba Marmion, O.S.B., of Maredsous Abbey, who had died in 1923.

The building and the property at Jasper were, on November 9, 1934, sold to the religious community called the Sons of Divine Providence.⁹ The transfer was also motivated by the hope for the eventual foundation of a new monastery, which would have been out of the question at Jasper.

Under its previous management, the school at Aurora had been only for day students. Out of consideration to those students who had begun their course at Jasper Academy, the new management welcomed them to continue their course at Marmion as boarders; in fact, it was soon felt that, without neglecting its obligation to admit the day students from the Aurora parishes, the school, to be self-supporting, would in addition have to take in resident students.

Up until April, 1935, St. Meinrad had accepted the new school only tentatively. But in view of the \$145,000 indebtedness on the Fox Valley building and property, there arose serious doubts whether St. Meinrad, already burdened with a heavy debt on its new Minor Seminary, could assume the additional debt that would accompany the donation of the building and property at Aurora. At that juncture, Bishop Hoban, well pleased with what the Fathers had accom-

⁹ Minutes of Chapter meetings, St. Meinrad's Abbey, April 20-25; July 1, 1933. Subsequent important steps leading up to the erection of Marmion Abbey will likewise be found recorded in these Minutes. See also *The Grail*, XXV (1943), pp. 263-267.

plished during the first two years of their work at Aurora, made a special trip to St. Meinrad. He presented a written and signed statement, offering the high school under terms acceptable to St. Meinrad's Abbey. The parishes, in turn, would be freed from the obligation of providing for the upkeep and improvement of the building and the grounds and for the payment of the annual salaries to the teachers. On that basis, the Chapter on April 25, 1935, decided to accept the school permanently and to conduct it at its own expense. The decision was made with the firm determination to do justice to the trust that the Bishop and the parishes of Aurora were placing into the hands of the Fathers. This mutual good will and sense of security greatly favored the quick development of the school and of the community conducting it.

The faculty at Marmion next proposed to introduce military training and discipline in the school. The school would be called "Marmion Military Academy." The Chapter gave its consent to the plan on May 9, 1935, and the arrangement was put into operation with the beginning of the next scholastic year. By special designation of the Secretary of War, Marmion was subsequently given official recognition as a military school. Instruction in military science, drilling, inspection, and so on, was done by U.S. officers. Far from being a hindrance to the regular scientific and religious training of the young men, the military training was rather an asset.

Following the plan that the St. Meinrad monks had in accepting this school, Marmion was eventually to develop into a new Benedictine foundation—into an Abbey. In 1942 the question came up as to whether the first step toward that goal might be taken by making Marmion an Independent Priory. The matter was thoroughly treated in chapter on June 20, 1942. It was decided that for the time being the best course lay in making Marmion a Dependent Priory. On June 20, 1943, Abbot Ignatius appointed Father Gilbert Hess, O.S.B., to be the Prior of the Marmion community.

The affairs of the Priory continued to develop so favorably that on January 14, 1947, Abbot Ignatius could recommend to the Chapter to take into consideration the erection of the Priory into

an Abbey. The Chapter consented. After all requisite formalities had been complied with, the Abbot sent the pertinent petition to the Holy Father. Pius XII granted the petition by an Apostolic Brief dated March 21, 1947. By the same Brief the Holy Father appointed Father Gerald Benkert, O.S.B., recommended by Abbot Ignatius, to be the first Abbot of Marmion Abbey. The Abbey was placed under the patronage of St. Augustine of Canterbury.

Besides Abbot Gerald, the motherhouse gave this new daughter-house 23 priest-monks, 3 clerics, and 6 lay Brothers—an exceptionally good start for a new foundation.

In a special, elaborate ceremony on May 1, 1947, the new community made its formal departure from St. Meinrad. On May 22, Abbot Gerald received the solemn abbatial blessing from Bishop John J. Boylan of Rockford, during a Pontifical High Mass celebrated in the spacious gymnasium of the Marmion school. Archbishop Edward F. Hoban, who had been transferred to the Diocese of Cleveland, preached on the occasion. Abbot Gerald was assisted during the Mass by Abbot Ignatius and by Coadjutor Abbot Stephen Schappler, O.S.B., of Conception Abbey, Missouri. Two other Archbishops, several Bishops, a large number of Abbots and other members of the clergy, the student body and many of the laity attended the solemn function.

Few Abbeys, if any, have had so smooth a course preceding their final establishment as did Marmion Abbey. May its further course be similarly blessed.

As early as March 10, 1877, Abbot Martin Marty writing to Brouillet, wondered if he would ever succeed in having in Dakota "two monasteries as centers and seminaries of the missionary corps."¹⁰ The hope of having monastic life in the midst of the Indians is expressed in another letter, of October 9, 1878, to Father Brouillet. The Archbishops and Bishops of the United States, assembled in the Second Plenary Council at Baltimore, had in their pastoral letter praised the influence that the Sisters by their life and work exert "up-

¹⁰ Catholic Indian Mission Bureau.



MARMION ABBEY, AURORA, ILLINOIS, 1947

on those estranged from the faith." Abbot Martin mentions this episcopal approval and continues: "But we need also men, priests and Brothers of the same virtue and heroism, and in order to get, train, and sustain them we ought to have at a favorable point in the Dakota country a Benedictine monastery on the plan—if not on the same dimensions—as the Abbeys created one thousand years ago in the wilderness and among the barbarous nations of Europe."¹¹ He advocated "even, two or three mission houses (Priories) in Dakota or near its boundaries," which would be sponsored by as many Abbeys; he realized that in the course of time these missions would be too costly for St. Meinrad alone.¹² For a while the mission at Stephan was kept in mind for such a central monastic mission house. But as Martin Marty became better acquainted with the country, he laid aside all these plans because of the doubt whether such a house among the Indians could be self-supporting, as a Benedictine Abbey should be.

As early as 1941, Father Sylvester also entertained the thought of a central Indian mission house or Priory in some favorable locality of North or South Dakota, which eventually might develop into an Abbey on a moderate scale. In the autumn of 1943, he engaged the attention of Abbot Ignatius for such an undertaking and expressed the wish that the name Blue Cloud be connected with it.¹³

Father Sylvester favored the name Blue Cloud for the future missionary Abbey, because of his admiration for an old Indian Chief called *Mahpiato* (*Mahpiato* is usually rendered "Blue Cloud," though it could also mean "Blue Sky"). When Father Sylvester first came (September 8, 1918) to St. Paul Mission, the eighty-five-year-old Chief asked to see him. The Chief was sick, and he told Father Sylvester that he had been baptised by Father De Smet and that he and his family had kept the Catholic faith all the time that the Yank-

¹¹ Catholic Indian Mission Bureau.

¹² St. M. Ll. VIII, p. 1012 (Abbot Martin to the Dean of Einsiedeln, August 22, 1877).

¹³ For the sources for this foundation since 1943 see St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Blue Cloud "Abbey" Priory* (Several Contact Letters, Deed, Abstracts, News clippings).

ton Reservation had been under the control of the Episcopalians. Years after the revoking of Grant's "peace policy," Father Westropp had come to minister to them, and now Father Sylvester had come. Father Sylvester was touched by the old man's simple story. Since the Chief was gravely ill, Father Sylvester gave him the last Sacraments. Mahpiato died a few days later, September 27; he and his wife lie buried at Marty.¹⁴

Abbot Ignatius was enthusiastic over the plan for a new foundation, and he pursued it energetically; from that time on, in confident anticipation of the final step, he spoke and wrote of "Blue Cloud Abbey." It was only on October 10, 1949, that, on a trip through South Dakota, he found a piece of property, about one mile southeast of Marvin, that seemed to be a place of exceptional beauty.

On October 25, Abbot Ignatius laid before the Chapter the question of whether St. Meinrad's Abbey should found "a mission monastery in the Dakotas." The Chapter voted in the affirmative. The course of future events will no doubt bring to light the full meaning of the modifier "mission," added to "monastery."

On December 6, the somewhat neglected Kasperson farm of about 400 acres was obtained at a bid of \$8,665 in a public auction. The farm was in the very surroundings the scenery of which, two months previously, had attracted the attention of Abbot Ignatius.

The new foundation was to be made with forty members, seventeen of whom already were stationed at the various missions; most of the other members arrived from St. Meinrad on June 24, 1950. Father Gilbert Hess, O.S.B., was appointed Prior of the new mission house. Father Gualbert Brunsman, O.S.B., had come up with ten workmen from Marty to make the old farm buildings inhabitable; the renovation job was completed by the end of May, 1950. On May 15 Father Gualbert celebrated the first Holy Mass at the site of the new foundation.

Edo Beli, an architect from Chicago, was engaged to make the plans for the new buildings. The design reveals a rather novel—

¹⁴ Father Sylvester's *Notes on History of St. Paul's at Marty*.

one might say modernistic—style. The outside walls are of brick tiles and a sandstone veneer—the stone, quarried from the Abbey quarry, is a donation of St. Meinrad's Abbey. Nearly all the work is being done by the monks themselves.

With a large part of the building ready for occupation, arrangement was made for formal establishment of community life on August 4, 1952. Abbot Columban, O.S.B., President of the Swiss-American Congregation, officiated at the ceremony. The first function of the newly established community was the singing of Vespers, August 4, for the patronal feast of Our Lady of the Snow. This feast, August 5, was to be a day of public celebration and had been widely publicized; special invitations had been sent to the Abbots of the Congregation and to other prelates. Abbot Ignatius himself was the celebrant of the Pontifical Field Mass, at which the Ordinary of the Diocese of Sioux Falls, Bishop William O. Brady, preached a remarkably fine historical sermon.

For a short time, "Blue Cloud Abbey" was merely a dependent Priory of St. Meinrad. The Holy Father was petitioned to erect the Priory to the status of an Abbey, in connection with the celebration of the centenary of St. Meinrad's Abbey in 1954. This letter of petition was dated January 15, 1954, the Feast of St. Maurus.

The Apostolic Brief of the canonical erection of Blue Cloud Abbey and of the papal appointment of the Right Reverend Gilbert Hess, O.S.B., its first Abbot, postdated March 21, 1954, arrived at St. Meinrad on March 11. Archabbot Ignatius went to Blue Cloud personally to supervise the transition of the Priory to an Abbey on March 25.

This triple expansion of extramural activity was counter-pointed by a triple reduction.

In 1937, Bishop Joseph E. Ritter, until his elevation to the Archbishopial See of St. Louis the Ordinary of the Diocese of Indianapolis, withdrew the pastoral care of the parish at Ireland, Du-bois County, from the Abbey and entrusted it to the diocesan clergy. That parish, so long as it was merely a mission, had been taken care of by the Benedictine Fathers at Jasper Academy. After it could



BLUE CLOUD ABBEY, MARVIN, SOUTH DAKOTA, 1954

be established as a parish, Father Anthony Michel, O.S.B., was made its pastor. He erected the church and other buildings.

In 1938, Bishop Ritter made the same provisions with regard to the pastoral care of St. Martin Church, Sabaria (post office: "Siberia"), Perry County. Father Isidor Hobi, O.S.B., had the little town of Sabaria laid out on Abbey property; one block—on the town plot designated as "Church Reserve"—was a donation of the Abbey.

Father Chrysostom Foffa, O.S.B., had established the mission of St. Martin in 1864; it was made a parish only in 1890. Father Anthony was made its first pastor, leading his people as architect, general supervisor, and common laborer here and there. Father Anthony put up a beautiful stone and brick church in that poor country, and he did so without contracting any debt. When Bishop Chatard came to dedicate the church, he asked Father Anthony: "How much debt, Father?" "None, Bishop." But a mortgage?" "No mortgage; but \$45 to our credit." At that the Bishop said pleasantly: "Father, you come and build my cathedral in Indianapolis. You know, a man who builds a church saves his soul." But Father Anthony replied: "No, Bishop. I have only one soul; and if what you say is true, my soul is saved." A few years later, however, transferred to the new parish at Ireland, Father Anthony did build another church.

Finally, on June 10, 1942, Bishop Ritter informed Abbot Ignatius that he was entrusting the large St. Joseph Parish, Jasper, Dubois County, to the diocesan clergy. The Fathers from St. Meinrad had had charge of that church since 1857 when Bishop Maurice de St. Palais insisted that they take charge of it. The church, school, Sisters' Convent, and the larger part of the rectory were built by the St. Meinrad monks.

At the Abbey itself, the school continued to be the principal occupation. The increasing number of religious vocations made it possible to continue on a larger scale the sending of the younger Fathers to various universities for the purpose of acquiring academic degrees in one field or another. Monks from St. Meinrad's Abbey have matriculated in twenty-four universities and other schools of

higher education. This intensified specialization is being done in compliance with recent regulations of the Holy See and with the requirements of state departmental authorities and educational associations in the United States.

The curriculum at St. Meinrad was, in September, 1931, reorganized on the basis of the American plan of higher education: four years of high school, four years of college, and four years of theology. Six of the twelve years are spent in the Minor Seminary and six in the Major, according to the European plan. In the Major Seminary the basis for the course of six years was laid in September, 1919. It was arranged to have four years of theology follow a two-year course in philosophy. Needless to say, the whole training, even from the start of high school, is focused on the priesthood.

Among the many who took courses of studies successfully at universities one is to be mentioned by reason of the bearing his studies and subsequent work have had and continue to have upon the reorganization of the whole curriculum at St. Meinrad. Father Theodore Heck, O.S.B., at present the Subprior, who from 1932 to 1935 attended the School of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America, at Washington, specialized in school administration. Upon his return to St. Meinrad, it was chiefly he who carried on and developed the reorganization of the curriculum that had been begun during his stay at the university. It was he who organized also the Office of the Registrar as separate from that of the Rector's office, an arrangement which promotes efficiency.

As first fruits of the reorganization and standardization of the curriculum, the Indiana State Board of Education on December 2, 1932, granted the high school department of the Minor Seminary a commission of the first class.¹⁵

On April 20, 1934, the North Central Association of Colleges and High Schools granted temporary (yearly) accreditation to the High School Department. On April 1, 1939, the accreditation was made permanent.

¹⁵ The correspondence and the documents for this development of the curriculum are in the files of the registrar's office.

On December 16, 1949, the Certification Commission of the Indiana State Department of Public Instruction accredited the College Department as a normal training school for teachers in Secondary Schools.

At present, the College Department is taking steps to meet the requirements of the North Central Association for accreditation as a college.

On December 22, 1943, the Theology Department of the Major Seminary was affiliated with the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C. According to the arrangement the university will, without requiring an entrance examination, accept students transferring from St. Meinrad to the university, and will recognize work done at St. Meinrad as meeting the requirements that the university has set for obtaining a degree; students who transfer for the fourth year in theology need only complete that year successfully at the university to gain the Licentiate in Theology. Lastly, on October 26, 1950, the Catholic University also affiliated the St. Meinrad College and High School.

Since August 16, 1951, Father Conrad Louis is the Rector of the Major Seminary.

The heavy schedule assigned to almost all the Fathers as a rule leaves no time for extra-curricular literary activity. Yet some such work has been done also within the last fifty years. Among the works published, one deserves special mention by reason of its very nature. In 1940, the Catholic Biblical Association of America commissioned Father Eberhard Olinger, O.S.B., to make an English translation of the Hebrew text of the Book of Psalms. The translation was published in 1950.

Over and above the curricular work, scholastic life at St. Meinrad is enriched also with various other cultural activities. The school seeks to promote the intellectual development of its students through different student associations and through lectures by invited outside speakers. Dramatics hold a high place of honor; each year a major play is produced, and there are numerous other lighter entertainments during the year. In addition to seeking

to instill into the seminarians a love and appreciation of Gregorian Chant, the school stresses the aesthetic and cultural value of other types of music, both vocal and instrumental. For example, the "St. Gregory Chancel Choir," made up of seminarians of both the Major and the Minor Seminaries, sings exquisite polyphonic music in connection with divine services, drawing upon the riches of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, of Orlando di Lasso, and of other masters. The same choir offers also other types of good music, including the works of contemporary—also of local—composers, either in connection with divine services or in separate concert. The Abbey Symphony Orchestra gives two concerts a year for the students; made up of members of the Abbey and seminarians and occasionally including eminent guest artists, the orchestra features classic and contemporary compositions of merit. At Ordination time and on other occasions during the year, the Abbey Concert Band is featured.

Seminarians are likewise offered the opportunity of special instruction in organ, piano, and violin.

On January 4, 1934, Bishop Ritter, after conferring with his Consultors, decided that on account of the lack of available funds he would for the time being no longer assume responsibility for the payment of board and tuition of his diocesan students in the Minor Seminary. And the seminarians of the Major Seminary were asked to pay all, or a notable part, of their own board and tuition. Attendance in the Minor Seminary during the next scholastic year fell from 214 to 130 students; many of these 130 were from other dioceses. In the course of time that policy was reversed, and the number of students again rose. For the present scholastic year there is an enrollment of 351 in the Minor Seminary and of 298 (including 26 Fraters) in the Major Seminary.

From 1863, when the first three monastic clerics were ordained, and from 1867, when the first diocesan clerics were ordained to the priesthood, up to the present time (May, 1953), St. Meinrad has been instrumental in giving to the Church 1,773 priests, among whom are twelve Bishops and one Archbishop. With the help of God, St. Meinrad has made good the promise that Einsiedeln gave Pope Pius

IX, namely, that in the new foundation "young men are to be educated for the sacred ministry by the religious . . . and, having completed the course of studies, are to be placed at the disposal of the Bishops of that country, so that from that institute ever new laborers can be presented to the Church."

Because the whole institution has been greatly expanded and the number of students has greatly increased during the past few years, and since the number of new vocations has not increased enough even to compensate for the members of the Abbey who have gone to new foundations, a very large number of lay helpers have to be employed. For the benefit of these employees the Abbey took care in time to have them come under the provisions of the Social Security Act as amended in 1950, effective January 1, 1951. Two bereaved families of such employees now already are the beneficiaries of those provisions. Under the same mutual financial obligations the Abbey carries hospital insurance for its employees, an insurance that includes their dependents; finally, for those who choose to cooperate, also life insurance.

So long as extensive building activity was in progress, Abbot Ignatius, though much more liberal than Abbot Athanasius with regard to increasing the holdings of the library, had as a matter of prudent economy kept the expenses for the library within moderate limits; but of late he has made very generous allowances to the library. Not only have very many technical periodicals been subscribed to, but many other new works of value are being added. The library now numbers over 50,000 volumes. An expert cataloguer has been employed to supervise the cataloguing of the library after the Library of Congress System. This expert and an assistant, together with the Abbey Librarian and several helpers, have been working at the project since May 1, 1950. If all goes well, the work of cataloguing will probably be completed by 1963. The Abbey Library is extensively used by the seminarians. Besides, both the Major and the Minor Seminary have sizable libraries of their own.

St. Meinrad's Abbey had at all times enjoyed a good reputation in regard to the liturgy both by reason of its rubrical performance

of the sacred functions and of its appreciation of their spiritual contents; for that matter, the daily life in a well-ordered Benedictine monastery is a constant liturgical movement in the best sense of the word. Since about 1910 there have arisen in some countries organized efforts to further a deeper penetration into the history and meaning of the liturgy and to stress it as a vital factor in forming Christian life. The Benedictine Abbeys of Solesmes, in France, of Mont César, in Belgium, and of Maria Laach, in Germany, have been very active in this work.

In his Contact letter of July 21, 1934, Abbot Ignatius wrote:

On the afternoon of July 16, the Prior of Maria Laach, the Very Reverend Albert Hammenstede, O.S.B. . . . arrived at St. Meinrad's Abbey. Prior Albert is in this country to arouse interest in their Liturgical school at Maria Laach . . . On learning how few students Maria Laach had in this Liturgical school I suggested to Prior Albert that he and another Father of the Faculty come to America to give their Liturgical course in condensed form here at our Abbey during the space of 3 or 4 months . . . Personally I am very eager to bring the benefits of this Maria Laach school to St. Meinrad's Abbey . . . I am writing to Abbot Herwegen, to acquiesce to this plan.

Though the plan did not materialize, Prior Albert again came to St. Meinrad in 1936 to conduct the retreat for the monastery in the spirit of the monasticism and the liturgical theology of Maria Laach, as Abbot Ignatius had desired. During World War II he came a third time to St. Meinrad to stay until, after the cessation of hostilities, he could return to his monastery.

St. Meinrad has encouraged the further development of the liturgical movement. This participation resulted at St. Meinrad itself in the singing of more parts of the Divine Office and of the prayers at table, and in additional splendor of the many pontifical functions. The Beuron *Caeremoniale* has been accepted for the Investiture of the Novices and for the Profession of Vows.

The Liturgical Week that the Benedictine Liturgical Conference held in Chicago, in 1940, was duplicated at St. Meinrad inasmuch

as Abbot Ignatius ordered that instead of attending the scheduled classes the monastery and the whole student body assemble for three days in the auditorium to listen to a rereading of the papers that had been read at Chicago and to discuss them.

The Liturgical Week of 1942 was to be held at San Francisco, but the Pearl Harbor attack in December, 1941, and the consequent war with Japan changed that plan. At first it was feared that the Liturgical Week for 1942 would have to be canceled; but Abbot Ignatius saved the situation by inviting the conference to hold its next Liturgical Week at St. Meinrad's Abbey. The meeting was held there from October 12-16, 1942. About 250 visiting priests and a few laymen were given rooms in the Abbey and the seminary. The seminarians and nearly all the Fathers relinquished their rooms and beds to the visitors and slept in their recreation hall or anywhere else where a cot could be put. Some of the laymen were lodged in the town. Visiting Sisters were accommodated overnight at the nearby convent in Ferdinand. Eight hundred fifty-one visitors, in all, attended the 1942 Liturgical Week.

Especially inspiring was the joint participation at the Pontifical Solemn Mass on the opening and on the closing day and at the Solemn Mass on the other days. It was also impressive to participate with the group in chanted Vespers and Complin every day.¹⁶

There have been many other conventions at the Abbey within the last twenty years, both of educational and religious character. There was, for example, the convention of the National Catholic Music Educators Association (October 28-29, 1949). Lectures, study groups, and chant practice signalized this convention. On October 28, the St. Meinrad polyphonic choir of 100 voices, chosen from among the seminarians, gave a concert for the Convention. On

¹⁶ In his Contact Letter of October 28, 1942, Abbot Ignatius records the details of the housing and boarding problem. For the Proceedings see the *National Liturgical Week Held at the St. Meinrad's Abbey... October 12-16, 1942*. For further material such as propaganda, program, chant books, registration figures, see St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Liturgical Weeks, 1942 at St. Meinrad*.

the 29th, at the Pontifical High Mass and, in the afternoon, at Pontifical Vespers, there was a practical demonstration of community singing—the *Ecclesia cantans* in action.

But by far the most spectacular religious concourse of people at St. Meinrad was that of "Fatima Week," August 14-20, 1948.¹⁷ During the eight previous weeks, nearly all the energy and attention of St. Meinrad was to be directed toward that event.

At the invitation of Abbot Ignatius, Monsignor William C. McGrath and Mr. Stephen Orazz brought to St. Meinrad the "Pilgrim Statue," a replica of the statue of the apparition of the Blessed Virgin at Fatima. Under the patronage of Bishop John F. O'Hara, of Buffalo, New York, they were touring the United States with the statue in order to spread the message of Fatima throughout the States. A number of cars from St. Meinrad and a van car in blue, bearing a large banner across the top with the words "Fatima Week at St. Meinrad," proceeded to West Baden, Indiana, to receive the statue and escort it to St. Meinrad. Three children, representing the children to whom the Blessed Virgin is believed to have appeared at Fatima, were on a float near the end of the motorcade as the immediate personal escort of the statue. The Catholic parishes along the road and byways to St. Meinrad had promised to have 150 cars as a motorcade escort. By the time St. Meinrad was reached, the motorcade consisted of 749 cars.

"Each day there was a total of twenty-one functions, including communion Masses, Pontifical Field Mass, Marian Hours, Vespers, outdoor evening service, and Compline." Each morning when the church doors were opened at 3:30—Matins always begins at 4 o'clock—persons were waiting to come in. On account of the enormous crowds the main services, the Pontifical High Masses, the sermons, and the Marian devotions were held outdoors. A large, elevated altar and a pulpit had been constructed near the Abbey church.

¹⁷ In the book *Fatima Week Sermons, St. Meinrad Indiana* (a Grail publication, 1949), Abbot Ignatius makes a fourteen-page detailed enumeration of the enormous task of organizing the Abbey and a number of the townsfolk for that occasion.

For the whole week, the crowd was estimated as totaling 125,000.

St. Benedict calls his Order "a school of the Lord's service." History, as well as the present day, can attest how during these hundred years St. Meinrad's Abbey has endeavored—and still endeavors—to comply with St. Benedict's scholastic curriculum of service of God by a life of prayer and work within the monastic enclosure—of prayer both official and private, and of work both intellectual and manual. These are the two wings that take man Godward. In this "school of the Lord's service" there are at St. Meinrad several departments: the Fathers, the Fraters or Clerics, and the Brothers. Each department has its own round of duties in regard to prayer as well as to work; the spiritual and most of the intellectual work in the church, the class rooms, the parishes and in religious institutes is the responsibility of the Fathers; the Clerics devote themselves mainly to the studies preparatory to the priesthood; the Brothers apply their strength and talents in whatever appropriate manual or intellectual work is to be done in the house, in the shops, or in the open.

The forty monks at the recently established Blue Cloud Abbey no longer included, St. Meinrad Archabbey at present numbers one hundred and ninety members: of these, ninety-nine are priests; seven, solemnly professed clerics; nineteen, temporarily professed Clerics or Fraters; six, choir novices; forty-nine, Brothers; five, Brother Novices; and five, Monastic Oblates. At present the Brothers recite in English a modified form of the monastic breviary, prepared and printed at the Abbey.

Since the position of the Brother is at times not sufficiently understood and appreciated—as though the position of St. Joseph, so far as personal sanctification is concerned, were less exalted for not having been that of an Apostle—Abbot Ignatius has established a new department in the Abbey, namely a sort of preparatory school for the training of Benedictine Brothers. This school, which is lodged in St. Placid Hall, opened its doors in September, 1934. Its nature and method are given in the following extract from the annual catalogue of St. Meinrad Seminary, 1951-1952:

To foster vocations to the Brotherhood, our Abbey has opened a special department called "The Junior Brothers." Boys that have completed the eighth grade are invited to consider the vocation to the Benedictine Brotherhood. Any boy that desires to consecrate his life to Almighty God, who desires to live in a Monastery, and yet not become a Priest, may be said to have such a vocation.

Besides pursuing a high school course of studies, our Junior Brothers have the opportunity to learn some trade or craft. They wear the habit of the Oblates of St. Benedict and enjoy the advantages of a Monastic environment. The ultimate aim is to lead these boys to make profession of the Monastic Vows and to become full-fledged Religious.

This oblate school is an experiment that should be productive of good results. Up until the year 1953, three hundred and eighty-four pupils have been enrolled. Forty-five of them have in due time entered the Novitiate. Thirteen of these are now Brothers professed with Perpetual Vows. Over and above these, there are, of course, a larger number of Brothers who, usually a few years older, have come from various walks of life to become members of the community.

Since its beginning, St. Meinrad has never been content with living merely for itself. History shows how in the past the Abbey has spent itself generously—at times beyond its strength—in the school, in ordinary and extraordinary pastoral work, and in the Indian mission field.

Of late, several additional lines of activity for the benefit of the Church and of society at large have been stressed, though such works have not been unknown to St. Meinrad in the past: the conducting of summer courses in religion, in philosophy, in chant, mainly in Convents; the conducting of retreats for religious as well as for the laity; and the spiritual care of the Secular Oblates of St. Benedict. During the summer of 1953, for instance, a number of Fathers conducted, in all, thirty-six retreats. Since 1930 a retreat for laymen is held every summer at the Abbey.

The policy of the Abbey to share its spiritual treasures with seculars, both men and women, by associating them as Secular Oblates with the monastic family, goes back to March 21, 1879, the Silver Jubilee Year of the founding of the monastery. On that occasion, as has already been mentioned in Chapter VIII, Abbot Martin solemnly introduced the Secular Oblate movement at St. Meinrad. Shortly thereafter, on March 31, he wrote to Abbot Boniface Wimmer that the promotion of that movement was to be one of the main objectives of the next twenty-five years; as part of the movement he stressed the liturgical element, perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the sacrifices connected with it, and the life of prayer as "Benedictine leaven for family and society." What was done thereafter to further this movement is not known; whatever records of it there may have been very probably perished in the fire of 1887. It was Abbot Athanasius who revived interest in the Secular Oblates. On November 18, 1906, he obtained a rescript from the Holy See which granted that students of both the Major and the Minor Seminaries might be received as "Oblates" when they had completed the fourteenth year of their age.¹⁸ The records of this movement begin with December 8, 1906, with the enrollment of twenty-one students; it is only since 1924 that other persons were also enrolled as Oblates. Up until the present day, 2,403 persons have been enrolled. In a good number of cities and towns there are enough Oblates to form a group called a Chapter. Both by a monthly circular and, in the case of Chapters, by an occasional conference in the spirit of St. Benedict, the moderator directs the Oblates Godward. Alert pastors have not failed to see in the Oblate movement as well as in the retreat movement an aid to the spiritual care of the souls entrusted to them.

This is the life of "pray and work" of the first hundred years of St. Meinrad Abbey—in living terms a timely expression of timeless monasticism.

At the General Chapter of the Swiss-American Congregation

¹⁸ St. Meinrad Archabbey archives, folder, *Roman Documents* (Petition and Rescript).

held in March, 1953, Abbot Columban, the President of the Congregation, proposed that in view of the centenary of St. Meinrad's Abbey, in 1954, the Congregation petition the Holy See to raise this Abbey to the rank of an Archabbey. The Abbots readily seconded the proposal and requested the President to draw up the petition.

Abbot Columban motivated his petition with the part St. Meinrad's Abbey had in the founding of the Congregation: St. Meinrad had founded three other Abbeys and now had made a fourth foundation—a dependent priory—at Blue Cloud; St. Meinrad had helped also directly and effectively in the founding of Immaculate Conception Abbey and, consequently, had helped indirectly in the foundations made by Conception Abbey. St. Meinrad, therefore, was the Mother Abbey of all the monasteries of the Swiss-American Congregation.

When during the subsequent summer, Abbot Columban was in Rome for the General Meeting of the Abbots of the Confederation of the Black Benedictines, he handed his petition to the Sacred Congregation for the Affairs of Religious Societies; the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation, in turn, submitted the petition to the Holy Father, Pius XII. The Pope granted the petition on October 25, 1953.¹⁹ By that act St. Meinrad was made an Archabbey, and the present Abbot, Ignatius Esser, automatically became an Archabbot; the future Abbots of St. Meinrad Archabbey will have the same title.

No special jurisdiction is connected with this title; it is one merely of honor. But to the monks of St. Meinrad this title will be an incentive to continue to work all the more zealously in the section of His vineyard that God in His providence will assign to them.

And so the past as well as the present activity of St. Meinrad Archabbey presages that its members, together with the blessings received from God, will also in future not be a spiritual mortmain to society. As of old the Highpriest, coming out of the sanctuary, where through communing with God his soul had become filled with

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, folder, *St. Meinrad Archabbey* (Petition and Rescript).

heavenly blessing, in turn shared that treasure with the people by blessing them under the threefold invocation of God, so the monks of St. Meinrad Archabbey, spiritually enriched through the service of the Lord according to the Rule of St. Benedict, will continue to come forth from their cloistered sanctuary to bless society with every spiritual good "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."





THE COMMUNITY AT DIVINE SERVICE

St. Meinrad's Abbey
(1854 - 1954)

Alike the mighty Matterhorn that stands,
And reaches upward to salute the sky,
That catches active and admiring eye,
And welcomes travelers from many lands,
To summon eager climber's feet and hands
To scale its snowy summit, huge and high,
While hazards and great dangers they defy,
Complying with ambition's sweet commands,

So stands St. Meinrad's Abbey in the hills,
With her majestic, gay and gleaming spires,
To render inspiration, hope and thrills,
Religion, learning, virtues man admires.
Named for the holy hermit, hallowed name,
St. Meinrad, it has won eternal fame.

E. A. Richardson (Indiana's Poet Laureate)
Evansville, May 7, 1954.

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